

YOUR PAY ENVELOPE

JOHN R. MEADER

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YOUR PAY ENVELOPE

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BY

JOHN R. MEADER

EDITOR OF "THE COMMON CAUSE"



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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM STATED

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am glad that you have asked me if the soap-box orator told the truth when he said that all the arguments against Socialism are either "lies" or "foolish misrepresentations."

The soap-box orator wants you to believe that all the wise men in this world are Socialists, and that those who do not accept the teachings of Karl Marx are either ignoramuses or wicked men.

You tell me that your "common sense" teaches you that "there are two sides to every question." This statement shows that you are an honest and a practical man. You say that you are a worker, a trade unionist, a Christian—all of which means that you are a good citizen. These frank statements are the best introduction you could offer. It

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is this kind of man who insists upon having "facts," and who is not likely to be carried away by theories—even by plausible theories. He insists upon knowing that there are plenty of "facts" to back up the theories before he accepts them.

Hence, I am going to write to you at some length—to you and to all the rest of the John Smiths. In these letters I shall express myself as simply and as clearly as possible. I shall give you plenty of facts—"the hardest of hard facts"—and a mass of cold, logical reasons that cannot fail to appeal to "robust common sense" and the "love of fair play."

As you have said, there are two sides to every question, and the question of Socialism is no exception to this rule. The reason that the soap-box orator attracts so large a crowd is because he tells the people who listen to him a lot of things which they know are true.

He tells them, for example, that wages and the expense of living have not kept equable pace with each other—that the smaller rate of wage which the worker received fifteen or twenty years ago may really have been a higher rate of wage be-

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cause the man who got it was able to buy more with it. He tells us that it is a bad thing that children should be compelled to work for a living at an age when they ought to be in school or playing the games which nature intends children shall play. He points to the employer as he rides by in his \$4,000 touring car, and he asks how long it has been since you have had a ride in an automobile. He reads to you the newspaper report of an elaborate dinner given by "society women" to their poodle dogs, and supplements it with another item, from the same paper, telling the number of people who have died of starvation during the past six months. With eloquent words, vibrant with sympathy, he paints a picture that makes your blood boil with indignation, and the worst of it is that the things he describes are true.

Every man, if his heart is in the proper place, knows that things are not right. He knows that there are plenty of workers today who do not earn money enough to enable them to live decently. He knows that workingmen do not make their wives and children toil in the factories for the mere joy of knowing that they are not idle. The

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worker is not so blind to the advantages of education, that he does not want to see his children well-educated. If he insists upon their going to work instead of to school, it is because he needs the few dollars which they can earn to supplement somewhat his own too meagre wage.

The worker is justified in not being satisfied with his lot. If a man is treated unjustly, he has a moral right to protest; and I am the last person who would wish to deny him that right. At the same time, I am going to take exception to one statement that the soap-box orator makes. He tells us that Socialism is the one and only solution of all the industrial and social evils of the world. He asserts that, if enough of us will vote the Socialist ticket, we can get the industries away from their present owners and own them ourselves, paying ourselves for our labor by taking all the profits that now go to the men who furnish the capital to carry on the business.

If this were true—and that were all there was to it—I might be a Socialist. It is because it is impossible for it to be true that I am writing these letters; and, before I have finished, I think you will admit that I shall

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have proved that the soap-box orator is talking "through his hat."

I do not ask you to reject the teachings of Socialism because they are new or untried. Every good thing was new once, and I am not so foolish as to imagine that every possibly-good thing has been tried. Indeed, a great many ideas and inventions that have proved of the greatest advantage to the world were once denounced as impracticable. The telephone is one of them. I can remember the time when the best business men laughed at the idea of anybody's buying stock in a telephone company; they admitted that people could talk over the wire, but it was impossible to make them believe that the instrument could be made strong enough to carry the sound of the human voice more than a few blocks. They said it was all right as a "toy," but that it had no "commercial utility"—which meant that they did not think they could make any money out of it.

To tell the truth, some of the basic ideas in Socialism are not at all new. They are very, very old; but, if they were as old as a dozen Methuselahs, this fact would not make them any more true. It is not the age

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of a theory that makes it true; it is the principle underlying it. And I propose to show you that, instead of being the combination of all wisdom, the principles of Socialism are so unreasonable that it is difficult to understand how any thinking man can accept them.

To prove this, I shall resort chiefly to facts and very little to theoretical argument. I shall not ask you to believe that a thing is so, merely because I say that it is so. When I present an argument, I shall explain all the facts upon which it is based, and you may consider the argument on its own merits.

In doing this, I must ask you to forget yourself. A prominent Socialist writer has told us that it is necessary to "get out of the body to think." As he explains, "that means that when a problem is before you, you should not let any personal prejudice, or class feeling, come between that problem and your mind; that you should consider a case upon the evidence alone, as a jury should."

I shall be satisfied if you will follow this advice. I can ask you to do no more than to forget your own condition, your own troubles, your own life-problems, and consider

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this question simply as a man—as a jurymen, if you will. If you were asked to figure how much you can earn in three days and two hours and fifteen minutes at your present rate of wage, you would not think whether you were a Republican or a Democrat, would you? You would simply apply the rules of arithmetic to your sum, and I ask you to read my letters and decide, by the same kind of unbiased judgment, whether I am right or wrong.

By way of anticipation, let me assert that it is possible for us to solve every problem that confronts us to-day without resorting to the proposed “remedy” of Socialism. We have here a country, big enough and productive enough to give all the people plenty of room and all they want to eat. There are facilities to supply all the children with a good education and ample opportunities for recreation. The fact that so many of the people do not succeed in securing plenty, shows that something is wrong. But, is the “wrong” in our system of industry, or are we ourselves—and, when I say “we,” I mean the whole people, not you and me alone—to blame for these conditions? That is the important question.

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Socialism promises that it will right all wrongs and asserts that this cannot be done in any other way. I do not believe that Socialism could "make good," and it is here my task to prove it.

CHAPTER II

WHAT SOCIALISM IS AND ISN'T

Dear Mr. Smith,

Before beginning our investigation of Socialism, we must define our subject. To talk intelligibly about Socialism, I must first know that you understand what Socialism is and what it isn't.

You may say that the soap-box orator has made all this very clear to you, but you mustn't be too certain about that. The soap-box orator may know what Socialism really is, and what it proposes to accomplish, and he may not. I have known soap-box orators who knew so little about Socialism as to contend that it was nothing more than a political movement which proposed to institute some much-needed reforms along purely economic lines. And, there are other soap-box orators who, while fully qualified to tell you all about Socialism, wouldn't dream of doing it for fear of frightening you.

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It may be true that all Socialists agree to some extent upon a few basic principles; but they disagree about so many things that it is almost impossible to pin them down to anything definite. If a Socialist is cornered in an argument, he will try to elude you by asserting that Socialists are "not agreed" upon the answer to the question you have asked, or that "the issue is purely a matter of private opinion."

Have you noticed how cleverly Socialists can do this?

A Socialist agitator is out on a still hunt for converts. He meets John Jones and asks him why he does not join the Socialist party.

"No," says John, "I will not join the Socialist party, because it stands for industrial unionism and I believe in the policy of the American Federation of Labor."

"That's all right," replies the Socialist agitator. "There are plenty of prominent Socialists who are enthusiastic members of the A. F. of L.," and he reels off the names of a dozen or more. Of course, John Jones is persuaded that he was mistaken in his opinion of the Socialist party, and he joins.

Going a block or two further, the Socialist

agitator meets Bill Brown, and asks him why he does not carry a red card. Bill replies that he is opposed to the Socialist party because of its friendliness for the A. F. of L.

"I am opposed to violence, but I am an industrial unionist," he asserts, "and shall have nothing to do with an organization that stands for craft unionism."

What does the Socialist agitator do? From his pocket he extracts a pamphlet written by Eugene V. Debs, in which Mr. Debs expounds the doctrines of industrial unionism and shows that it is impossible for a Socialist to be a conscientious craft unionist. So, realizing that, as Socialism's foremost advocate, Eugene V. Debs ought to know what Socialism means, Bill Brown signs up.

A few moments later, our Socialist agitator comes face to face with Joe Black.

"Come, Joe," he says, as he grasps his hand, "you are a good Radical. Why aren't you in the Socialist party?"

But Joe shakes his head.

"Not for mine!" he asserts, emphatically. "I want nothing to do with a party that is opposed to direct action. How is the worker to get what he wants unless he takes it? I

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believe in *The Revolution*, but not in the milk-and-water kind of revolution the Socialist party preaches.”

“That’s where you are mistaken, Joe,” replies the Socialist agitator. “Why, some of our leading Socialists believe just exactly as you do. Here”—and the agitator draws from his pocket a copy of the Haywood-Bohn pamphlet on “Industrial Unionism”—“take this with you and read it. It will show you how we Socialists stand on the question of the industrial revolution.”

So Joe Black lines up, too.

I might continue in this strain indefinitely, for there is scarcely a question at issue upon which Socialists do not disagree so widely that those who preach Socialism can manage to be all things to all people.

But, you ask, what *does* Socialism mean?

Let me answer your question by first telling you what Socialism does not mean. In this way, we shall more quickly get to the real meaning of the term.

I have met Socialists who told me that Socialism means absolutely nothing but the promotion of a reform program: that it means shorter hours and better pay, the elimination of child labor, the government

ownership of inter-state industry, the municipal ownership of municipal utilities, and so on.

If you read the program of "Immediate Demands" in the Socialist platform, you may get the idea that this definition of Socialism is a correct one. But you would be mistaken. The "Immediate Demands" of the Socialist party are not Socialism, and no real Socialist pretends that they are. Indeed, in the platform of 1908, the Socialists themselves repudiated this idea. Let me quote the closing paragraph of this program:

"Such measures of relief as we may be able to force from capitalism are but a preparation of the workers to seize the whole power of government, in order that they may thereby lay hold of the whole system of industry and thus come to their rightful inheritance."

Think the matter over calmly, John. Measures of relief that are nothing more than "preparations" for an object cannot by any possibility be that object itself—can they?

Then, too, there are plenty of Socialists who have not the slightest use for a program

of "Immediate Demands." The Socialist party has found these demands useful in persuading people to vote for its candidates, and, for this reason, it goes right on talking about "Immediate Demands," as if these "sops" to social reform were simon-pure Socialism.

The absurdity of this position is well pointed out by H. G. Wells:

"You cannot change the world and at the same time not change the world," he says. "You will find Socialists about, or at any rate those calling themselves Socialists, who will pretend that this is not so, who will assure you that some odd little jobbing about municipal gas and water is Socialism. . . . You might as well call a gas jet in the lobby of a meeting house the glory of God in heaven!"

If anybody should tell you that H. G. Wells is merely one Socialist out of many millions, and that he does not know what he is talking about, ask him if Wilhelm Liebknecht knew his Socialism any better. If your Socialist is honest, he will have to admit that Wilhelm Liebknecht knew what he was talking about, whether Wells does or not.

Assuming this to be true, listen to what Liebknecht says:

“The laboring class is exploited and oppressed by the capitalist class and . . . effectual reforms which will put an end to class government and class exploitation are impossible” (quoted by Ejayh in *Weekly People*, June 17, 1911).

If your Socialist still insists that Liebknecht is not sufficiently good authority, you can refer him to Karl Marx himself, for it was he who said:

“The working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. . . . Instead of the conservative motto: ‘A fair day’s work for a fair day’s wage,’ they ought to inscribe on their banners the revolutionary watchword: ‘Abolish the wages system’ ” (quoted in *Appeal to Reason*).

In brief, to quote Liebknecht again (*The Revolt*, May 6, 1911), “pity for poverty, enthusiasm for equality and freedom, recog-

dition of social injustice and the desire to remove it, . . . condemnation of wealth, and respect for poverty," government ownership or municipal ownership, an agitation for a shorter work-day, the demand for a more equitable wage, an extension of the suffrage—not one, nor all of these things is Socialism.

And if not, what *is* Socialism?

Socialism is an indictment of the whole system of modern civilization, a plan to overthrow it, and a scheme to set up in its place a system of society in which all means of production, distribution and exchange shall be owned collectively and operated collectively.

To attain this end—to effect the overthrow of all existing institutions that the "more perfect" institutions of Socialism may take their place—Socialists preach a gospel of class consciousness, by which they hope to incite so strong a feeling of class hatred in the heart of the worker that he will rise in revolt against his employer and take from him all the means of production and distribution—by the peaceful method of the ballot, if he can do it in that way; if not, by violence and with bloodshed—the bloodshed

Victor Berger threatened when he advised the worker to "be prepared to back up his ballot with his bullets."

This is what Socialists mean when they talk about *The Revolution*. This is the method by which they hope to attain their goal, the Co-operative Commonwealth, in which, if the plan of Socialism does not miscarry, there will be but one class—the working class—and all human beings will actually love one another so much that they will dwell together in peace and harmony ever after.

It is a beautiful picture—this idea of the lion and the lamb lying down together. It is so enticing a promise that I might almost be willing to go through a wee bit of a revolution myself in order to attain it, if I could only believe that everything would work out in the way Socialists predict that it will.

It is right here, John, that I am compelled to part company with the Socialists for good and all. I am just as thoroughly enamoured peace and harmony as Debs or Haywood or Hillquit. Not one of these gentlemen would welcome a world without social evils and social miseries more heartily than I. But, when I sit down and start to

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figure out the problem logically, I find that the evidence against Socialism accumulates rapidly. Between you and me, John, Socialism could not do what it promises to accomplish even if it had the chance. You don't see why it couldn't? Well, I'll show you.

CHAPTER III

THE WORKER'S WAGE

My dear Mr. Smith,

If you stop at the street corner to listen to a soap-boxer, there are two things that he is pretty certain to tell you: first, that you are a "wage slave," and, second, that you are being "robbed" every day you work.

With a flood of words, carefully prepared to appeal to men in your position, and with stories that are supposed to illustrate the points he wants to make, the man on the street-corner will try to persuade you that labor is the sole factor in wealth production—that the workers produce all the wealth of the world—and that this wealth belongs rightfully to those who made it.

The agitator will tell you—what you already know—that there is a part of the product of your toil that goes to your employer. This should not surprise you. When you consented to work for three dollars a day, it was with a clear understanding

that you would do enough more than three dollars' worth of work a day to give your employer a fair return upon his investment. I'll wager, you never suspected that he had no right to this share, but, instead, was stealing it from you, until the soap-box orator began to tell you that you were being "robbed."

If you question the speaker as to the extent of this "robbery," you will get little satisfaction. Socialists all agree that the worker is "robbed," but they disagree very materially as to the amount of which he is "robbed." One Socialist (I. L. P. pamphlet, "Simple Division") tells you that the worker receives only *one-seventh* of what he produces. Another (Hazell, "A Summary of Marx's 'Capital' ") asserts that labor obtains *one-fifth* of its product. Still another (Victor Grayson, Speech, June 4, 1908) announces that the worker takes *one-quarter* of what he really earns. Another English Socialist (author of "The Basis and Policy of Socialism") proves by statistics that *one-third* of the total product goes to the man who ought to have it all. A more reasonable individual (Chiozza-Money, "Riches and Poverty") estimates the worker's share as a

"trifle more than one-half," while Suthers, who makes a specialty of answering objections to Socialism, figures that the returns to labor represent *two-thirds* of the amount that the worker ought to receive ("Common Objections to Socialism Answered").

You see what a hazy idea the Socialists have upon this question, how chaotic and self-contradictory their statements are; yet it is upon such "facts," that the contentions or claims of Socialism depend.

The soap-box man's statements about the "robbery" of the worker are based upon a principle that is taken from Karl Marx's book, "Capital," which is the Bible of all real Socialists. Karl Marx said that "labor is the source of all value," and it is upon the truth of this statement that the whole economic structure of Socialism rests. If it is true that labor is the source of all value, it is possible to argue that the laborer is entitled to all he produces. If labor is *not* the sole source of value, the laborer is not entitled to all he produces and it is nonsense to say that he is. Thus, the whole question of the fairness of the principle upon which the modern wage system is based stands or falls with this "law" of value.

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I suppose it is safe for me to assume that you have never read "Capital." I suppose it is just as safe to assume that you never will read the three bulky tomes in which Marx has expounded the economic system that we call "Socialism." You needn't be ashamed to admit this fact. There are lots of others like you. Even the soap-boxer, who quotes Marx so fluently and who upholds his theories so energetically, has no advantage over you in this respect. It is a safe hundred to one shot that he also has never read—and never will read—"Capital."

The German poet Heine tells us that when Hegel, the well-known philosopher, lay on his death-bed, he declared: "Only one has understood me." But, immediately after, he added, irritably: "And he did not understand me, either."

If this story had been told of Marx instead of Hegel, I should be quite as ready to believe that it is true. If the soap-box orator should attempt to explain the Marxian theory of value, he would have no audience in five minutes. It is because he explains the effects of this "law," and not the principles supposed to underlie it, that he

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finds so many people willing to listen to him. Nobody wants to be "robbed," and, when the Socialist orator asserts that all workers are constantly being "robbed" of the larger portion of their earnings, we are interested at once.

So, if I am to make you understand the reason that this theory of the Socialists is false, if I am to prove to you that you are not "robbed" (at least not in the way the Socialists say you are), I must avoid the technical words and often unintelligible expressions that have made Marx's "law of value" so difficult to comprehend. I must appeal strictly to your common sense. Then, if you want to go more deeply into the intricate detail in which Marx has framed his economic theories, there are several books that will give you all the information you can possibly digest. One of these is "Socialism: A Critical Analysis," by Professor Oscar D. Skelton of Queens University, Canada; another is "Socialism" by Cathrein-Gettelmann. You will find them in any good library.

Marx separated value into two classes: *value in use* and *value in exchange*. "Use-value" means the value that an article has in

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satisfying some human need. "Exchange value" means the value that an article has when we come to exchange it for something else—for money or for other articles. Thus, an article may be very valuable *for use* and still have no value *in exchange*. For example, both water and air are necessary to human life and so are very useful, yet, should we desire to exchange them for clothes or fuel, we should find it a difficult matter to make such a bargain, simply because water and air are usually free to all.

Articles that have *exchange value* are those for which men are willing to give something "in exchange," but as the articles we can't sell are frequently just as useful as those for which we can get a price in the market, Marx argued that there must be something in one that the other does not contain—some one factor upon which exchange-value depends—and he decided that this common element is *human labor* ("Capital," p. 4).

Was Marx right in this assumption? Is it "labor that makes value"?

When you go to the store to buy an article, you do not ask what it cost the manufacturer to produce it, do you? You don't

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care whether the man who made this article has profited by its manufacture or not. It doesn't occur to you to ask how many hours of labor were put into it, or how much the workers who made it were paid. The question uppermost in your mind is: "How badly do I want it?" If you want it so badly that you would rather own it than spend the same amount of money for something else, you purchase it and take it away with you. If you prefer to spend the money in other ways, you go away without buying this article.

Now, what is the principle that influences you to make this decision? It is what this article is worth to you for your own use, is it not?

Has labor anything to do in making you form this decision? Neither capital nor labor has anything to do with the question. If the article has cost the manufacturer ten times as much as you are asked to pay for it, if ten times as much labor had been expended in making it, you wouldn't give one penny more than it is worth to you for its use, would you?

Let us take another illustration:

Marx points out that labor—and he meas-

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ures the value of labor by the time necessary to perform a given piece of work—is the sole source of exchange-value. As a result, Socialists propose to substitute what they call labor certificates for our present system of money, so that a man who spends four hours making cigars can buy with his labor certificates anything that represents a proportionate amount of labor.

Would this be a fair basis of exchange?

Would it be fair if a man working four hours in making cigars were to exchange the product of his labor for the gold or the diamonds that it had taken some other man four hours to extract from the earth? And is there no difference in the value of a silk dress and a cotton dress, if both kinds of cloth take the same time and skill in the making? Would it be fair to figure the value of any article on the amount of labor-time expended in producing it? There are mines in which gold is produced at a cost of less than \$5 an ounce, and there are other mines where it costs so much to extract the gold that there is no profit in mining it. Is anybody so silly as to believe that the labor-time spent in one mine is as productive of value as the time expended in the other?

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Any farmer will tell you that it is impossible to make the varying costs of agricultural products harmonize with the theories of Marx. In raising wheat, or potatoes, a great deal depends upon the quality of the land. If the land is very good, wheat may be grown at a cost of 50 cents a bushel, and with much less labor than the farmer would expend in raising wheat on poorer land, though the latter crop might cost from 75 cents to a dollar a bushel to raise, if not more.

It is not the cost of an article that determines its value. Its value is based primarily upon its capacity to satisfy human wants. A useless article has no exchange-value, no matter how much it has cost. An article that has gone out of fashion possesses comparatively little value, in spite of the fact that it represents the expenditure of capital as well as actual labor which was "necessary labor" at the time it was performed. The Socialists have to admit this fact—Marx also admitted it ("Capital," p. 189)—yet they do not seem to see the inconsistency of saying that the value of an article is affected by its loss of utility, while, at the same time, asserting that "a useful article has value

only because human labor . . . has been embodied in it." If they told the truth they would say, "an article upon which labor has been expended has value only because it is useful." But this would be to admit that their whole scheme is built upon a foundation of sand.

A commodity has value, not only because it has cost time and skill to produce it, and therefore is difficult of attainment, but also for the reason that it holds the one common property of all valuable articles—utility. It is true that articles of value are seldom produced without labor. It is not true that it is labor that makes them valuable. In confessing this, Socialism acknowledges that the law of Marx is contradicted by experience. Are we Simple Simons not to see this very obvious contradiction?

Take the commodity timber—because the woods which we use in building houses and those which are used in making furniture possess radically different values.

If you were to go to a primitive country, John, you would find plenty of trees that you could cut down, without asking anybody's permission and without paying anybody for the privilege. Suppose that you

were to take a gang of men into such a forest and were to cut down a lot of trees. If you took no pains in selecting these trees, but cut various kinds of wood, you would get different prices for the timber, and these prices would not in any way depend upon the cost of production (cutting down the trees) or the expense of transportation. As you know, there is a market price for every kind of wood, yet one wood costs practically no more than another to produce, and one may be transported as cheaply as another. What does this price depend upon? Upon *utility*, does it not? It is the *use-value* of the wood that ultimately fixes its price.

Then, too, you may take the products of the arts—the books we read and the paintings we admire. Does the amount of labor-time expended in the making fix the value of these commodities? An author may devote years to writing a novel, and yet see it fall still-born from the press, whereas another novelist, in a few months, may produce a story that nets him \$25,000. Does labor-time count as a factor in determining the value of our books, our pictures, our musical compositions, or our scientific discoveries?

There is still another factor to be consid-

ered, John, and that is the productive power of thought. Marx, as you would see were you to analyze the first pages of his book, "Capital," starts off with the idea that all labor is common, manual labor. Later on, he encounters the difficulty that labor when undirected is usually unproductive. A thousand men, working without direction, will produce nothing proportionate to the amount of physical strength they expend. Put a man with brains and knowledge over them, and he will show them how to make their labor fully productive.

Even Marx recognized the fact that he must make some provision for "skilled" and "mental" labor, so he grudgingly bridged over the gap by stating that "skilled labor counts only as unskilled labor, a given quantity of skilled labor being considered equal to a greater quantity of simple labor" ("Capital," p. 11).

Socialists to-day try to deny that Marx intended to imply that the term "labor" means "average manual labor." They will tell you, if you question them closely, that the term "labor" includes industrial effort of every kind—mental as well as physical labor. This is a worse absurdity than to say

that manual labor is the source of all value. If we are to admit that "labor" includes every kind of effort, the assertion that all wealth should go to the laborers who produced it simply means that all wealth ought to go to the human race. And so it does. The only question remaining is: *How can it be distributed more fairly?*

This would take the very cornerstone away from the Socialist's structure and bring it tumbling about his ears. If we do this, there is practically no room for argument left, for the number of persons who in no way contribute to the industrial progress of the world—the inheritors of wealth who are literally and positively idle—is so small that there is no reason why we should give them much serious consideration.

CHAPTER IV

HOW THE "ROBBING" IS DONE

My dear Mr. Smith,

After asserting that labor produces all value, and "showing" that the laborer receives but a very small portion of the value which he produces, Marx tells us that this unpaid-for labor—the labor-strength and time of which the worker is robbed—is used by the Capitalist Class (Marx's term for the employer) in the further robbery of the worker. This unpaid-for labor Marx calls "surplus value," and he includes under this term everything that the worker does not get in his own pay-envelope—dividends, interest, rents and profits of all kinds.

Of course, nobody will deny that "surplus value"—or, more correctly, profit—may exist in industry. If the employer could not reap more from the industry than the mere equivalent of wages paid, it would not be to his interest to keep on paying wages. But the "surplus value" to which I refer, and the

thing that Marx means when he talks about "surplus value," are entirely different.

To admit that Marx is right in his definition of surplus value, we must first come to the conclusion that the worker is entitled to all the value that is produced, and, as we have already seen, this is not so. If it is not so, what has become of Marx's surplus-value theory? There may be industrial injustices; there are many instances in which employers fail to pay those who work for them a just wage. I am willing to admit that there are numerous cases of this kind. If I thought it would add to the strength of my argument to particularize, I could name many unjust employers. But it would do no good. Between the abuses committed by individual capitalists and the "awful crimes of capitalism" which Socialism depicts, there is a difference as great as the distance from pole to pole.

According to Marx's theory, if a laborer can produce something equal to the amount of his wage in six hours of work, the value of the product which he turns out during the other six hours in his work-day is stolen from him. "The extra six hours," says Marx, "I shall call *surplus labor*, which realizes itself

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in a *surplus product* having a *surplus value*" ("Capital," p. 178).

Have I made this clear, John? Do you see what Marx is driving at—that, when you are helping your employer to pay his rent, the interest on the money he has borrowed that he might keep you at work, the dividends to his stockholders, or the profit to himself, you are helping him to rob you—actually contributing to the robbery of yourself?

The soap-box orator will talk to you by the hour about surplus value. He will tell you that it makes no difference how much money there is in your pay-envelope. So long as it does not contain every cent of your employer's profit, you are being "robbed." "No wage can ever be fair compensation for a day's work!" he shouts. "Before there can be justice on earth, the making of goods for profit must come to an end, for this is the 'tap-root' from which all the evils of Society develop. No dividends! No Interest! No Rents! No Profits! In a word, no Surplus Value!"

Marx, like the soap-boxer on the corner, includes all profits in the category of robbery and exploitation. He admits that la-

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bor can do nothing without capital, but he contends that capital itself is the product of past labor and, therefore, ought rightfully to belong to the laborers of the present day. "Capital," he says, "is dead labor, that, vampire-like, lives by sucking living labor" ("Capital," p. 134).

In this we have the assumption that all labor is performed by "laborers" of the propertyless class, and that all capital is owned by "capitalists."

This, as you know, is not true.

There are plenty of laborers who have a respectable little store of capital laid by for the proverbial rainy day, and many of them own stock in the very concern that employs them. Not every man who lives by the labor of his hands is existing on the verge of starvation, as Socialists would have you believe, nor is it true that all labor is performed by the "laboring class." Many so-called "capitalists" are truly sons of toil, the performers of manual labor and the producers of wealth, even as Marx would define a "producer."

But, let us stop generalizing, and get down to cases.

Marx says that all profit is robbery and exploitation. As an example of the utter

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absurdity of this theory, let me cite an illustration which Mr. G. W. de Tunzelmann once used in a debate with a prominent English Socialist.

He took the case of a man who buys a diamond for \$498,000. The man pays \$2,000 to the diamond-cutter for cutting the stone, and, finally, sells it for \$550,000, making a 10 per cent. profit upon his outlay. If Marx argues rightly, this sum of \$50,000 was obtained by robbery, but—who was robbed? Was it the diamond-cutter who was defrauded of a portion of his wages? Should the entire \$52,000 have gone to him for his part in the transaction, while the capitalist got nothing?

The Socialist who was debating with Mr. de Tunzelmann found it impossible to answer this question intelligibly. “If the \$50,000 did not come from the diamond-cutter’s wages, where did it come from?” was all he could say, and, John, it is all that any Socialist can say!

Then, here is an illustration from my own experience:

I have a friend who bought a painting from a young artist, paying \$300 for it. This was a very fair price to pay for the

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picture. The artist was well satisfied with his bargain and my friend felt that the work of art was well worth \$300 to him. Several years passed, and the comparatively obscure artist became a famous artist—so famous that there were lots of people who wanted to buy his pictures, and my friend found that he could sell his painting and get \$2,000 for it.

May we again ask: Who was robbed? The man who painted the picture received its full value at the time; the man who bought the picture from my friend was satisfied that he got good value for his money. If Marx is right, my friend robbed somebody to the extent of \$1,700. But whom did he rob?

As we have already seen, the value of an article is chiefly a matter of utility as affected (raised or lowered) by difficulty of attainment—not the worker's "difficulty of attainment," not the time and effort he had to expend to produce this article, but your "difficulty of attainment," or the effort you must make to secure it. The part that the worker plays in the production of a commodity is of minor importance when compared with the other factors which operate

in determining its value. It is the employer, and not the worker, who assumes all the risk. It is the directing genius, and not the mere physical force used in operating the industry, that determines whether it shall succeed or fail. If this were not true, every business enterprise would be a success, for it would be nothing more than the proposition of getting money and men together and setting them to work. But you know that this is not what happens in real life.

Mr. Hyndman, the celebrated English Socialist, attempts to say that such a thing is possible. In his manual of Socialism he asks us to believe that a man who has \$50,000 would find it a very simple matter to live permanently by robbing other men of part of the products of their labor. This man, he tells us, merely buys a mill of some kind—*doesn't it matter what kind of a mill he buys?*—employs a manager and the necessary number of operatives, and then sits down and lets the wheels go round. Don't smile, John, for this is precisely what Mr. Hyndman tells us the man does. "He has nothing to do but sit still and watch the mill go," he asserts, naively (see Mallock's "Socialism," p. 13).

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Do you believe this? Socialists do. As a practical man, do you imagine that any one method of employing capital will be just as successful as any other? If the laborer produces all value, and an article is valuable simply because of the labor there is in it, Mr. Hyndman and his master, Karl Marx, and the soap-box orator, who is telling you how to solve all of life's problems by voting for the candidates on the Socialist ticket, are right. If this is not true, they are wrong, and you can't get away from this conclusion. One might as well argue that an engine is sufficient unto itself and needs neither working capital in the form of fuel nor the directing hand of the engineer.

There is another class of "capitalists" who receive comparatively little attention from the Socialists. These are the employers who make no profits upon their investment, who purchase material and pay their workers' wages and who do not earn enough to reimburse themselves for their outlay. The commercial agencies which report business conditions have records of many such cases. Men go into business and fail; people put their money into stock companies and never receive dividends. The work is done; the

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labor is performed; but there is no surplus value of which the worker may be "robbed." In this case are we to assume that the unfortunate investors are robbed by their workmen?

Marx maintains that all capitalists are robbers. Are we therefore to believe that all capitalists are successful? We cannot deny that capital, and even the product of labor, may be transferred by the process of robbery. Before there can be any robbery, however, the capital or the value of the product must exist, and it is beyond the power of labor to call either *capital* or *value* into being.

CHAPTER V

YOUR OWN PAY ENVELOPE

My dear Smith,

Having seen that the Marxian theories of value are not the sanely "scientific" laws that Socialists declare them to be, but are utter absurdities that run counter to all laws of logic and even contradict human experience, we shall now get down to your own individual pay envelope, for that is the thing which most interests you. But, please don't imagine that, because we have stopped talking about Marx's theories for the moment, we have reached the end of our list of Socialist fallacies. To tell the truth, we have just begun to enumerate them. Silly as these ideas are in theory, they do not begin to attain the full limit of their absurdity until we attempt to apply them to the practical affairs of life.

Last night I stood at the street corner and heard the soap-box orator "educate" the crowd. He told them that the average earn-

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ings of every worker in America was \$2,500 a year—a trifle more than \$48 a week—and he asked the men if they had found any such sum of money in their pay-envelope recently.

You can imagine the answer he received to this question, John. Yet, the soap-boxer still asserted that this was the amount each worker had earned, and insisted that the difference between \$48 and the sum he had received represented the amount of which his employer was “robbing” him. From the look on the faces of some of the men, I felt that the agitator had made an impression upon them. He reeled off his statistics so glibly that you really couldn’t blame them for believing him.

Of course, he also told them that, under Socialism, nothing of this kind could happen—that they would get their \$2,500 a year, and more, too, and that they would have to work only half as long a time each day in order to earn this amount of money. “We must change the ‘system,’ ” he cried. “We must stop the making of goods for profit! Then, and then only, will you put an end to the exploitation that is the cause of all your poverty and misery. It is the only way you can throw the parasite-capi-

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talist off your back. You are being robbed of four-fifths of your wages, and you're not allowed to keep even the little you get, because capitalism, after robbing you by taking four-fifths of the money you earn, puts the prices of everything you buy higher and higher until there isn't a penny of your earnings left for yourself, and you don't get a chance to live decently, at that."

You have heard this kind of talk. You may have thought that there was some truth in it. You—like all the rest of us—are confronted with the problem of the cost of living, and—like most of us—you wish that you could earn more money. "Is it possible," you ask, "that I am earning four times as much as I get, and that I am being 'robbed' of the greater part of it?"

If you listen to the Socialists you will come to believe that this is just what is happening. A Socialist paper published in Kansas has spent a lot of money to advertise the fact that, when Socialism triumphs and you get what you actually earn, you will be paid \$2,000 a year for six hours a day.

This is a very conservative estimate—for a Socialist. As you may have learned by this time, the writers and speakers who un-

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dertake to tell the worker what is to happen to him under Socialism do not agree about the amount of money he will get and the length of time he will have to work in the Co-operative Commonwealth, any more than they do when they try to estimate the extent of the "robbery" from which he is suffering.

Usually, the rate of payment is fixed at \$2,500 for four hours' work a day. A writer in a popular magazine fixes the sum the worker will be paid at \$5,000. Suthers, the English Socialist, promises the equivalent of \$10,000 a year, and there is a band of "comrades" on the Pacific Coast who can demonstrate "scientifically" that a 3-hour day affords sufficient time in which to earn a decent living and even the luxuries of life.

Well, do you believe any of these statements? I hope you are not such a simpleton as to be fooled by the bald assertion of any speaker or writer when you have, within your reach, the facts from which you can learn the truth for yourself.

Let us pursue this more rational method. Certainly, the Socialists cannot object if we check off their calculations and find out if

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they have made any mistakes in their figuring.

According to the last United States Census report—and that ought to be good enough authority for anybody—the total value of all the goods manufactured in this country during the year 1909 was \$20,672,052,000 and the number of persons employed in making these goods was 7,405,513. If we divide one by the other, we find an earning capacity of more than \$2,700 per man; but, unfortunately, that is not the way things work out. There are certain expenses of manufacture that have to be deducted from the “gross value” before we can even begin to calculate the earning capacity of the worker. One little item we mustn’t forget is called “Cost of Materials.” Another item is known as “Miscellaneous Expenses.” After you have received your wages, you are perfectly willing that your employer shall deduct these “expenses” before figuring his own profits, are you not?

In 1909, the “cost of materials” alone represented the tremendous sum of \$12,141,291,000 and the “cost of miscellaneous expenses” was \$1,945,676,000. When we subtract these two charges from the “gross

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value," we have \$6,585,085,000 left, and if we divide this sum by the number of workers, we find that the average product of the worker was but \$889.23.

What did the worker actually get? The "cost of labor and salaries," in 1909, was \$4,365,613,000, and, if we divide this by the number of workers, we learn that the average is \$589.52.

This is quite different from the story the Socialists tell us. Had all the industries in America been owned and operated collectively, in 1909, the worker, at the best, could have received but \$299.71 more than he did, for, as you must admit, such factors as "cost of materials" and "miscellaneous expenses" must needs be considered, even under the collective system of industry. Certainly, the worker in the textile mills could not produce the cotton and wool and silk, and the shoemaker could not raise the animals and prepare the leather, even were Socialism to bring about all the marvelous changes it has promised.

Yet, this is precisely what the Socialists do when they commence to quote "facts." It is useless for them to deny the charge, for there is no other method by which they can

figure an average earning capacity of \$2,500 for each worker. To do this it would be necessary for the employer to get his cotton for nothing, his leather for nothing, and everything he uses in making his product, for nothing. Moreover, it presupposes that he can procure free fuel, free light, and, what is still more improbable, that he has to pay nothing for new machinery or for repairing the old. Do you think that the Socialist is showing himself the "friend" of the worker when he fills his mind with such "dope" as this?

And, even, the figures we have worked out are not fair—to the employer. He does not make a profit of more than \$299 upon the labor of each of his workers—not by any means! Out of the \$299 must come the cost of selling and transportation, bad debts, taxes, interest, etc., so that, when we have deducted all these charges, we can scarcely question Willey's justification for the assertion ("Laborer and the Capitalist," p. 22) that capital actually receives no more than 6 per cent net profits on its product. Moreover, as *The American Federationist* points out (July, 1905), the census figures fall short of giving us the actual cost of manu-

factures, as the original "gross value" upon which our calculations are based is itself "arrived at by a constant duplication of value, owing to the fact that the finished products of one plant become the material of some other factory, in which they are changed into some higher form and again included in the value of products."

I will admit that it is practically impossible to compile statistics that will take such facts as these into consideration, and the Socialists do not act fairly when they lead us to assume that all these conditions have been considered in their figures. How many times do you suppose the value of the same piece of leather is computed from the time it becomes a hide until it is turned out, a finished product, from the shoe factory. Yet, as we have seen, every time the value of this material is included in the value of products it gives the manufacturer credit for a sum of money that never reached him.

Let us suppose that we were running all our industries under just such a collective form of government as the Socialists propose to establish, and that, as a result, we were bound to see that every worker got the \$5,000 a year he has been promised. Do

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you see what that would mean? Figure it out for yourself—multiply the 7,405,513 workers in the industrial plants by the \$5,000 that each would have to be paid, and then remember that the seven millions of workers represent only a small proportion of the workers to whom this sum of money must be given by the Co-operative Commonwealth. Even counting the seven millions alone, we have a total of \$37,027,505,000—almost twice as much as the “gross value” of all manufactured products in this country to-day.

It is true that we do not know just how many men, women and children of working age there are who would have to be given a place in the collective pay-roll. In view of the total population of the United States, I do not think that any Socialist will accuse me of overstating the case if I assert that there would be 30,000,000 people to be provided for.

What would this mean? Merely an annual pay-roll of \$150,000,000,000—that's all.

Easy, isn't it! At present, we manufacture less than \$21,000,000,000 worth of goods—the consumable wealth produced in the

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United States is estimated by Socialists to be but \$30,000,000,000 (*Appeal to Reason*, October 5, 1912); yet they ask us to get busy and undertake to meet a pay-roll that is at least fully five times greater than the total product to-day. And, if you want to be as conservative as the most conservative Socialist statistician who is dreaming these dreams, and allow that labor under Socialism will be rewarded with a meagre \$2,000 a year, you will still have a pay-roll of \$60,000,000,000 to provide for, or twice as much as we make. How are you going to meet it? As a practical man, John, I ask you: *How*? Certainly not from the \$21,000,000,000 produced each year in manufactures. If we add to this the total wealth represented by the agricultural, mining and fishing interests of this country, we shall still fall far short of the sum we require. How is it to be done?

Absurd as all these promises are, we have not yet reached the limit—far from it! For example, we are told that in the Co-operative Commonwealth we shall have to work only half as long as we do now. In other words, the man who works eight hours a day now, will get along swimmingly by

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working four hours, and still receive the income promised—from \$2,000 to \$5,000 a year—for his effort.

Are we to understand from this that, though the worker, with the best machinery and the most scientific management now possible, succeeds only in turning out less than \$900 worth of goods in a year, he will be able, under collective management, to turn out from two and one-half to five times as great a product, while working just half as many hours?

You know that this couldn't be done. You know that, if you worked half as many hours as you do now, some other man would have to put in the other half of the day or only about half the usual product would be manufactured. If, therefore, we entirely disregard the fact that Socialists are promising to pay the individual worker more money every year than several workers are now able to produce, we are still confronted by a problem that defies solution. A certain amount of work must be done to keep the needs of Society supplied. To do this work, a certain amount of effort must be exerted, and, to exert this effort, a certain amount of time is necessary. Yet, the Socialists

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want us to assume that all of these appeals to common sense are absurd—that once the making of goods for profit has ceased, there will be no difficulty in meeting the industrial pay-roll, no matter how enormously its proportions may have increased.

And this leads up to still another very interesting phase of the situation. We are told by the Socialists that the making of goods for profit is to end, and that, in the Co-operative Commonwealth, such problems as the high cost of living will trouble us no longer. Once let the Socialists get control of our industries and we shall be compelled to pay no more than a commodity is actually worth.

Do you see into what a maze of absurdities the Socialists have led you? They tell us that we are to get anywhere from \$2,000 to \$5,000 a year. An English Socialist promises the workers \$10,000 a year, for what does a few paltry thousands matter when a great army of voters are to be fooled into casting their ballots for the Socialist ticket! In addition, you are assured that your work-day is to be cut in half, and you are further informed that, with the culmination of the profit system, you will be able

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to purchase everything you want at materially lower prices than are charged for such commodities to-day.

Will you tell me, John, where the Socialists are going to get the money to meet this enormous pay-roll, if they stop making goods for profit? Wages are to be increased out of all proportion to the present schedule; hours of labor are to be reduced to a minimum, and yet, despite all this, the prices of all commodities are to be cheapened, too.

You don't see how they are going to do it? No more do I! Suppose you ask that wise little man on the street-corner. Maybe he can tell you!

CHAPTER VI

YOU "WAGE SLAVES"!

My dear Smith,

If you were to tell the soap-boxer that Socialism is an impracticable scheme, and that it couldn't "make good" whether we all wanted it or not, he would become very indignant and would probably call you a "blind fool," if he did not shower upon you still more vituperative epithets. If you ever find yourself in such a position, don't let the soap-boxer place you on the defensive. When you talk about the impracticability of Socialism you put the Socialist just where he doesn't want to be, and, if you follow up your attack consistently and strenuously, you will have him on the run before you know it. Socialists like to theorize. They like to talk to people who don't ask for too many details, but they have little liking for the man who demands definite plans and accurate specifications.

You have a little house in a new suburban section. It is a small house and it has a mortgage on it, but you are paying for it gradually and it won't be many years before it will be all your own. Even now the payments and all the charges together call for a smaller monthly expenditure than would be required if you rented a home not nearly as comfortable as this one.

Now, John, suppose I were to come to you and tell you that if you would let me tear down your house I would build you another somewhere else. Wouldn't you be likely to ask me where the new house was to be located, and what guarantee I would give you that it would be a more satisfactory place of abode than the one which you now occupy? No matter how well you may know me—no matter how much confidence you may have in me as an individual—unless you are a very careless or a very stupid person, you will refuse to consent to any change in your domestic arrangements until you are certain that the proposition will be advantageous to you.

Such caution is entirely reasonable; this is the attitude you should take; yet Socialism asks you to disregard all such condi-

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tions. It expects you to believe that, when everything that represents modern civilization has been thrown into a vast melting-pot called "The Revolution," something will come out of it that will be very much to your profit. They won't tell you how this is to be brought about. They themselves have a vague idea in regard to what kind of a society we are to evolve into, and they try to describe it to you under the general terms of the "Co-operative Commonwealth." As a matter of fact, however, it is almost impossible to find any two Socialists who will agree, even as to the main points of their program, and some of the socialistic leaders are honest enough to admit that there is a poor chance that they would be able to carry out this program successfully, even if given the best of opportunities. For example, Edward Bernstein, who is a sufficiently good Socialist to be selected to represent his party in the German Reichstag, admits that, "*Socialism could not keep its promise if it were placed in power to-morrow.*"

Remember this the next time the soap-box orator calls you a "wage slave." Ask for specifications. Insist upon his telling you if Socialism would not introduce as hopeless a

form of slavery as the world has ever known, and—if not, why not?

It is a catchy phrase, the term "wage slave." It is a telling taunt that does good service for Socialism wherever there are people simple enough to be imposed upon. Yet if you, who are not a Socialist, will study this question you can easily turn the tables upon the limber-tongued agitator in a way to make him very unhappy.

In the first place, the use of the term "wage slave" would naturally lead us to suppose that, under Socialism, men will no longer work for a wage; that they will become their own masters, employing themselves and paying themselves the full product of their labor; in a word, that each will be free with a freedom such as man has never before experienced.

Knowing that this is the plan proposed by many prominent Socialist thinkers, it is somewhat surprising to find publications purporting to represent Socialism still promising the worker a "wage." It is true that they have greatly increased the amount of his remuneration until they promise him anywhere from \$2,000 to \$10,000 a year, but

they combine to talk about the "wages" he will get.

What does this mean? Simply that under Socialism he will still be a wage earner. He may receive labor checks instead of United States currency—or something equivalent in value—but, if such a system were to be carried out, he could have no more freedom than he enjoys to-day and from every indication it is not impossible that he might have considerably less. A man is no less a wage slave because he works for 90,000,000 and himself, than he is when he is employed by a single individual. This is a fact that Socialism overlooks.

Under the present system a man is free to choose his own method of livelihood. If he does not like one trade, he can learn another. If he wants to get out of the industrial sphere altogether and enter upon a professional career, there are methods of accomplishing this purpose within his reach, if he is willing to work hard enough to attain that end. It is true that there are certain restrictions under existing labor conditions—the area of selection is not as wide as it might be, yet there is a great deal more scope for the development of individual preference to-

day than there could possibly be under Socialism.

Let us see for ourselves.

Socialism provides for the collective ownership of all means of production, distribution and exchange. This means that the State—using the term as “collective” State, of course—would organize all these industries and would operate them upon a collective, which means a democratic, basis. Under such conditions it is doubtless true that every man would have an equal opportunity to earn a living, but it is absurd for anybody to assert that this equality of opportunity would also mean absolute freedom of choice.

If you want evidence in support of this statement, you can get it—and Socialist testimony at that.

In 1906, the Fabian Society of London—an organization composed of absolutely orthodox Socialists—issued a leaflet entitled, “Socialism and Labor Policy.” Let us see what they have to say about the freedom of choice we shall have under the collective régime.

“Everybody should have a legal right to an opportunity of earning his living in the

society in which he has been born," we read, "but no one should or could have the right to ask that he should be employed at the particular job which suits his peculiar taste and temperament. Each of us must be prepared to do the work which Society wants doing, or take the consequences of refusal."

Again, Sydney Webb, in his "Basis and Policy of Socialism" (p. 71), says:

"Instead of converting every man into an independent producer, working when he likes and where he likes, we aim at enrolling every able-bodied person directly in the service of the community, for such duties and under such kind of organization, local or national, as may be suitable to his capacity and social function. In fact, so far are we from seeking to abolish the wage system, so understood, that we wish to bring under it all those who now escape from it—the employers, and those who live on rent or interest—and so make it universal. If a man wants freedom to work or not to work just as he likes, he had better emigrate to Robinson Crusoe's island, or else become a millionaire. To suppose that the industrial affairs of a complicated industrial State can be run without strict subordination and discipline, with-

out obedience to orders, and without definite allowances for maintenance is to dream not of Socialism, but of Anarchism."

And Sydney Webb is not alone in these conclusions. Ramsay MacDonald, who is certainly one of the most conservative of Socialists, expresses the same spirit when he tells us that "trade must be organized like a fleet or education system" ("Socialism and Society," p. 172); while Suthers answers this particular "objection" by expressing the most genuine contempt for those who would protest against the kind of slavery that collectivism would introduce. He reminds us that the people themselves would then be masters. Who would oppress the people? The people themselves? Like so many other Socialists, he will not see that slavery is slavery under whatever guise it may operate.

The only attempts to escape this proposition have been most utopian in character. Bebel, for example, asks us to believe that, in a Socialist State, disagreeable work will be accomplished chiefly by means of mechanical devices and that such undesirable tasks as remained, and which could be performed only by personal action, would be

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freely undertaken, as an effect of the unselfish spirit which will prevail among the workers of the future. He even suggests that it will be possible to inaugurate a kind of changing-off system so that each member of society may in his turn submit to assignment to the performance of the more disagreeable duties.

While this suggestion may be equitable in theory, it is of no practical value. Picture to yourself what kind of a community we should have if each individual was compelled to submit himself by a changing-off system to the most disagreeable avocations that you can imagine. Can you say that "freedom" could exist under such a régime? Do you think that such a system is possible outside of the penitentiary?

Of still greater absurdity is Bebel's promise ("Woman," p. 271) that the members of the social body shall become so perfectly developed that, "without distinction of sex," they "shall undertake all functions" of society. As Cathrein says (p. 289), "this statement can hardly be said to deserve a refutation."

"Let us only imagine what such industrial and technical ability supposes," he continues.

"Every individual in his turn undertakes all social functions. For instance, in a factory he is director, foreman, fireman, bookkeeper, a simple laborer or hod-carrier; then he turns to some other branch of industry or social calling—becomes editor, compositor, telegrapher, painter, architect, actor, farmer, gardener, astronomer, professor, chemist, druggist. With such a program is any thorough knowledge of anything possible?"

You know, John, that the efficient worker is the man who has mastered a trade thoroughly, and you also know that the maintenance of his efficiency depends upon his constant attention to the ever-changing details of his particular trade. This means the application of a lifetime, yet Socialists tell us that, merely by the adoption of the collective system, all men will become so perfectly proficient in everything that they will be fitted to undertake every kind of work.

No, John, this is not a joke! I did not find it in *Puck* or *Judge*. It is Bebel and other equally bright lights of the Socialist philosophy, who are responsible for these assertions. Even Marx himself endeavors to prove ("Capital," p. 453) that the "separate individual" will be replaced by the "totally-

developed individual," and this development will confer upon the workman "absolute availability" for everything. If this is not a flight of imagination worthy of our old friend Baron Munchausen, what is it? Even Professor Paulsen, who cannot be called an anti-Socialist, protests in his "System of Ethics" (Vol. II, p. 437) against the equalizing tendencies shown by those who are trying to picture the future Co-operative Commonwealth.

"In the society of the future," he says, "the self-same individual will be letter carrier to-day; to-morrow he must perform the duties of a post-office clerk; on the third day he must act as postmaster-general—but why use a title?—in short, he must undertake all that business which at present the director of the national post-office has in hand—he must prepare programs for international post-office congresses, etc.; and on the fourth day he must again return to the counter; on the fifth he condescends to be letter-carrier once more but this time not in the metropolis, but in some out-of-the-way place, for it is but meet that the sweets of city life should fall to the lot of all in their turn. Thus it would be also with the railroad department, in the mining and military department and

in every common factory. To-day the member of the socialistic State descends into the bowels of the earth as a collier, or hammers at the anvil, or punches tickets; to-morrow he wields the quill, balances accounts, makes chemical experiments, drafts designs for machines or issues general edicts on the quantity and quality of the social productions."

So, you "wage slaves," you have been told what is in store for you. The utopian promises of some Socialist apologists are too ridiculous to be credited by a sane individual. The only thing that remains is the course which Sydney Webb and Ramsay MacDonald have outlined. The worker will still work for a wage. The officials of the new State will sanction the selection of his employment. He may take it or leave it, live or starve to death, for there will be but one master to whom he can turn for a job—the omnipotent State. It is the State that will tell him what he is permitted to do, and he will have no right save that of strict obedience.

As the author of "The Case Against Socialism" says (pp. 290-1): "A man might desire to be an electrical engineer. 'No

vacancies,' says the State. 'Ah, but I am sure that I can prove myself to be a much better man than some whom you have chosen,' replies the applicant. 'No outside competitions allowed,' says the State. 'We want masons, and a mason you must be.' 'But have I no personal freedom?' replies the man. The answer is that he belongs to the State, and, if the official is in the mood to graciously explain matters further, the man will probably be told that it is difficult enough to organize labor at all, and that the attempt would become impossible if anyone was so selfish as to consider such a trivial matter as his own inclinations."

What chance could a worker have under such circumstances? If he was not satisfied, he would simply have to pocket his dissatisfaction and make the best of it. What do you think of a body of men who, while planning this fate for the American worker, have the nerve to talk to him about "wage slavery"! Could anything be worse than this slavery with the State as a master?

CHAPTER VII

YOUR BOSS UNDER SOCIALISM

My dear Smith,

Having seen what the condition of the "wage slave" will be under Socialism, it is only fair that we should give a little attention to that other class in the Co-operative Commonwealth, the "bossing class." The Socialist speaker on the street-corner assures us that, when the Socialist ideal is realized, everything in society will be democratically managed. It is in this way, they say, and in this way alone, that true liberty can be realized. The fact that they do not make clear is that, if you accept their definition, "liberty" means liberty to do just as we are told and nothing more.

And there will be no lack of people with power to tell you what to do.

As Laurence Gronlund states in "The Co-operative Commonwealth" (p. 115), while the Commonwealth "guarantees suitable employment," it certainly cannot "guarantee a

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particular employment to everybody," and this, as your own good judgment must tell you, opens the way for the creation of an army of state controllers in numbers hitherto undreamt of.

The theory that efficient work can be performed without direction is so utopian that it has been discarded, even by the majority of Socialists. The most that they are trying to do to-day is to develop a plan whereby the actual worker and the army of bosses may exist without continuous warfare.

This brings us to the question: How are these bosses to be selected? For of course, so many will want to be bosses that some definite mode of selection must be resorted to.

Some socialistic prognosticators assert that the candidates for the directive positions will undergo a kind of civil service examination. Other authorities state that they will be chosen by drawing lots; but, as one writer has said, "in point of impracticability there is little to choose between the two suggestions."

The favorite theory, however, is that the choice of bosses will be made by popular election, and such a course would be emi-

nently socialistic in that it cynically and entirely ignores the claims of individual efficiency.

We know how inadequate a system of election may be, especially when popularity becomes the important factor in the choice of a candidate. It is not easy to imagine the complications that will ensue when every question of management of social affairs must be determined by the vote of the people.

In "Two and Two Make Four" (p. 230), Bird S. Coler, a most practical man of affairs, presents a sample of the questions upon which the people might be called upon to vote, thus giving us an opportunity to see how wisely we may be governed under Socialism:

"Boris Humphiak says puddling is a hot, hard job, and he doesn't see why he should blister and sweat while Reginald Carnegie just sits in a cool office talking to a stenographer. Comrade Carnegie explains to Comrade Humphiak that the Carnegie labor is necessary, directive labor, and can be performed in the office, while the Humphiak labor is manual labor and must be performed in the puddling room. Comrade

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Humphiak cannot see it. He says each man ought to take his turn at puddling and at superintending. Let us vote on it. There are a thousand puddlers, one superintendent. The vote is a thousand to one for the Humphiak proposition. Comrade Carnegie goes down to the puddling room, tries to puddle, to the intense joy of the other puddlers who cease labor in order to enjoy his weak and inefficient attempts to puddle; and, when blinded and exhausted, he overturns a vat of molten metal, those who survive are sorry and those who do not, among whom is Comrade Carnegie, do not care any more. Meanwhile, Comrade Humphiak goes into the office, lights a cigar and neglects to give some orders, as a result of which forgetfulness on his part, the mill burns down."

There is nothing absurd in the picture which Mr. Coler has drawn. Complications just as serious would arise were the questions of direction left to a popular vote; yet, if such matters are not settled by the ballot, how are they to be adjusted?

"Some kind of organization labor must have," says Herbert Spencer ("A Plea for Liberty," p. 10), "and if it is not that which

arises by agreement under free competition it must be that which is imposed by authority. . . . Without alternative, the work must be done, and without alternative the benefit whatever it may be must be accepted."

Socialists like to talk about abolishing class distinction. They know that this is one of the most attractive proposals that they can dangle before the envious and the ignorant. Yet what have we here but the establishment of two distinct classes—the directing or "bossing" class, and the obeying or working class? That Socialism would institute changes, there can be no doubt, but it would be a change in bosses, not a change in methods. As Professor Flint has said ("Socialism," p. 373), "it would place the masses of mankind completely at the mercy of a comparatively small and highly centralized body of organizers and administrators entrusted with such power as no human hand can safely and righteously wield."

Hobhouse in "Democracy and Reaction" (p. 228), clearly defines what this must mean:

"As the 'expert' comes to the front and 'efficiency' becomes the watchword of administration, all that was human in Socialism

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vanishes out of it. Its tenderness for the losers in the race, its protests against class tyranny, its revolt against commercial materialism," all the sources of the Socialist doctrines are gone like a dream, and "instead we have the conception of society as a perfect piece of machinery pulled by wires radiating from a single centre, and all men and women are either 'experts' or puppets."

It is thus that humanity, liberty and justice must vanish under Socialism, for the ultimate result, said Mr. Spencer ("A Plea for Liberty," p. 26), "must be a society like that of ancient Peru . . . in which the mass of the people, elaborately regimented in groups of 10, 50, 100, 500 and 1,000, ruled by officers of corresponding grades and tied to their districts, were superintended in their private lives as well as in their industries, and toiled hopelessly for the government organization."

Not in practice alone, but in theory as well, the Socialist form of government is nothing short of absolute depotism. The very fact that the citizens of a nation—or of the world, should International Socialism become possible—are divided into the two classes of controllers and controlled neces-

sarily provides for inequality in rank and an unequal enjoyment of the right of liberty. Socialists urge that, because the controlling class will derive their rights from the voluntary act of the controlled, such a condition of affairs will be freely undertaken. This may be possible in the beginning. It is quite probable that those destined to be controlled may, through their whole-hearted belief in Socialism, co-operate in the establishment of the new régime. But, later, it would begin to be a different story. Once having experienced the privilege of directing, it is quite beyond the bounds of reason to suppose that the director will consent freely to take his place in the servient class. A member of the official class, once that class has become firmly established, would strenuously resist any act threatening his position, and it would be doing an injustice to Socialists to assume that some of them have not seen this necessary consequence of their system. What would happen were such a move contemplated is frankly stated by Professor Karl Pearson. "Socialists," he says ("Ethics of Free-thought," p. 324), "have to inculcate that spirit which would give offenders against the State short shrift and

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the nearest lamp-post." As Professor Flint remarks, such a sentiment "gives expression to the thought which animated the first tyrant."

If you were to read the works of the prominent Socialist writers, John, you would find that Professor Pearson does not stand alone in his opinion. Robert Blatchford, in his popular presentation of Socialism ("Merrie England," p. 75), goes just as far in asserting that man has no right to demand any other freedom than that which the majority may be willing to permit him to have. "Just as no man can have a right to the land, because no man makes the land, so no man has a right to his self, because he did not make that self."

In spite of the crudeness and illogical character of this statement, it expresses only too forcibly the claim for the deification of the Socialist State at the cost of the complete suppression of the individual.

What does all this mean? In the last analysis it means that, if there is to be a servient class and a bossing class, it really is immaterial whether the worker belongs to the minority or to the majority. In either case, if he is selected as one to be bossed,

such will be his fate, for the only people who will actually count at all are the officials who have been chosen, by one means or another, to become the bosses. What will make the conditions of the worker under Socialism infinitely worse than it is to-day, is the absence of any means of associated action for redress. Under no circumstances could such an existence be tolerable save in an ideal State in which benevolence reigns supreme—a State where envy, hatred, tyranny, ambition, indolence, folly and vanity no longer exist; a State where there are only wise and good men; and in such a State even law and direction might logically become unnecessary.

The human race, John, is not fitted for such a State. Untold centuries will pass before this ideal millennium can even remotely be realized. In the meantime we are trying to improve conditions with the material which we have at hand. With such material, even were all the theories of Marx to be put into operation, human nature must be considered as a factor, and it takes no prophet to foresee what a hopeless muddle we should make of things if we tried to run society upon the principles which Socialism

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proposes. Even John Spargo admits that "there is no such thing as an 'automatic democracy,' and eternal vigilance will be the price of liberty under Socialism, as it has ever been" ("Socialism," p. 217).

Mr. Spargo is right as far as he goes, but he does not go far enough. He does not tell us that under Socialism vigilance would no longer be possible because it would not be tolerated; that with all trades and industries in the hands of the government, with all men and women dependent on the government for daily bread and compelled to do the work assigned to them, the State will consist of two classes only—state functionaries and ordinary people, controllers and controlled, masters and slaves. In what manner could man protect the rights of liberty under such a régime? What remedy could he have against oppression when he would always be pitted against "the State"—a State which would be placed in a position of being able to do no wrong.

"Wage slavery," John? Isn't this infinitely worse than any "wage slavery" of which you have ever dreamt?

CHAPTER VIII

SOME MORE "EQUALITY"

My dear John,

If you want to see how mad a man can get and still live, ask the soap-box orator if Socialism proposes to pay all kinds of workers the same wage. Tell him that you have heard that, in the Co-operative Commonwealth, there will be absolute equality of remuneration.

If you put this question to the street-corner agitator, I'll promise that you will get all that you bargained for and more. But don't be frightened by his torrent of wrath and indignation. Quietly but persistently press the question home. Have your quotations where you can get at them easily, and be sure that they are strictly "scientific"—that you have the right page of the book from which they have been taken. If you will do this, and maintain your equanimity, you can very soon take the wind out of the soap-boxer's sails, because, whatever

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some Socialists say to the contrary, equality of remuneration is the only possible outcome of the socialistic system, and there are plenty of simon-pure Marxists who admit as much.

In my last letter I told you what Socialism means by "equality of opportunity," and I proved the truth of my statements by citing quotations the authenticity of which no Socialist can deny. Not one of these quotations was "torn from its context," or otherwise mutilated, though there may be some Socialists who will tell you that this is what has happened.

Having seen that "equality of opportunity" means merely the opportunity to do the things that meet the approval of the bosses, we will now consider the question of equality of reward; and again we shall let the Socialists themselves tell us what Socialism really means to do towards "solving" the wage problem.

In the first place, let us refer to Karl Marx, for his orthodoxy is probably above suspicion. We find that the great master of the socialistic philosophy is a little uncertain as to what may happen during the transitional period between capitalism and the realization of the Socialist ideal. At this

Some More "Equality"

stage, he says, there may be inequalities in rights, including remuneration, but about the ultimate effect of collectivism, he has no such doubt. "In a higher phase of communist society," he says, "after the slavish subordination of the individual under divisions of labor and consequently the opposition between mental and bodily work has disappeared . . . after the individual has become more perfect in every respect . . . then only . . . society may inscribe on its banner: 'From each one according to his abilities, to each one according to his needs.' " ("Zur Kritik des sozialdemokratischen Parteiprogramms.")

It is difficult to construe this statement of Marx to mean anything except that the end of Socialism is practically complete equality in matters of reward. Certainly this is the idea which Mr. Spargo has formed from his study of the Marxist philosophy, for he tells us very definitely in his book, "Socialism" (p. 233), that "it may be freely admitted that the ideal to be aimed at ultimately must be approximate equality of income."

George Bernard Shaw, the eminent English Socialist, also admits that equality is

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the ultimate aim of Marxism. In a paper read before the Fabian Society, in 1910, and published in the *Fabian News* (January, 1911), Mr. Shaw defines Socialism as "a state of society in which the income of the country would be divided equally among the inhabitants, without regard to character, industry or any other consideration except that they were human beings."

And, that there might be no misunderstanding about his attitude toward this question, Mr. Shaw, talking to an interviewer for *The Labor Leader*, said (March 31, 1912): "Socialism is the system of society where all the income of the country is to be divided up in exactly equal portions; every one to have it, whether idle or industrious, young or old, good or bad . . . ; anyone who does not believe that, is not a Socialist. . . . Those are the conditions on which I say I am a Socialist. Those are the conditions on which Society should stand. The point is not whether they are reasonable conditions or not. They are the only workable conditions."

Mr. Shaw seemed to think it necessary to disarm possible criticism by admitting that the conditions he proposes might be called

"unreasonable." His fears are groundless. We do not dub his proposition "unreasonable"—indeed, it embodies the only reasonable conditions under which Socialism could be operated. The only unreasonable thing about it is that it absolutely defies any attempt to bring it into harmony with that other working proposition of Marxism: that every worker shall receive the full products of his labor. If all are to get the same reward, whether idle or industrious, whether valuable or valueless to the community, it necessarily follows that some portion of the proceeds of the industrious workers' labor must go to the worker whose labor has been profitless.

Discouraging as such a system of payment would be to industry and initiative, it still is, as a matter of fact, the only system that Socialism can adopt if it is to show any regard for the preservation of the collective character of the State.

If all workers are paid alike, it is possible that a certain degree of equality may be maintained. If, as Blatchford says in "*Merrie England*" (p. 103), "the only difference between a Prime Minister and a collier would be the difference of rank and

occupation," the mere worker may feel that he is living in a State in which class distinction has been largely eliminated. If, on the other hand, workers are to be paid according to the nature and value of their productions, how long do you think it will be before a new set of class distinctions will be created? How long will it be before the skilled workman who draws the fattest pay envelope will become the aristocrat, or, at least, will assume a class distinction mid-way between the bossing class and the class of unskilled laborers?

The Socialists themselves have recognized the danger that the problem of remuneration presents, and have tried to anticipate some of its difficulties by suggesting possible solutions. The sophists among them, of course, have sought to evade the issue, thus leaving the inquirer to imagine that this question, like all the other difficulties that confront the Collectivist, will settle itself when the moment of emergency arises. The more honest and consistent Socialists, however, are quite frank in their admission that equality of reward is the inevitable consequence of Collectivism. Even Spargo, in the quotation already referred to, admits that class

formation must take place and the old problems incidental to economic inequality reappear under anything less than an "approximate equality of income."

Mrs. Annie Besant, who is a much-quoted Socialist, takes the same stand. "Controversy," she says ("Fabian Essays," pp. 163-164), "will probably arise as to the division: shall all shares be equal, or shall the workers receive in proportion to the proposed dignity or indignity of their work? Inequality would be odious. . . . The impossibility of estimating the separate value of each man's labor with any really valid result, the friction which would arise, the jealousies which would be provoked, the inevitable discontent, favoritism, and jobbery that would prevail; all these things will drive the Communal Council into the right path—equal remuneration of all workers."

And yet as early as 1830—years before Marx and Engels had begun to prepare their "Communist Manifesto"—the French Communists addressed a manifesto to the Chamber of Deputies in which it was stated that the equal division of property would constitute "a greater violence, a more revolting injustice, than the unequal division

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which was originally effected by force of arms, by conquest."

The Socialist of the present day may well learn wisdom from the logic of his French predecessors. It is a self-evident fact that production must be most disastrously effected by equality of distribution. Where is the incentive to come from if the industrious or the highly skilled man is to be mulcted of a share of his earnings that it may be used to equalize things with the "work-shy," who happens to be indisposed to earn a living for himself? As one writer suggests, "it is to be no longer a question of 'Every man for himself, and the devil take the hindmost,' but we are to go to the opposite extreme and endeavor to establish an equally false doctrine of 'Every man for his neighbor, and the devil take the foremost.'"

Marx seemingly attempts to provide for this contingency by preaching the doctrine embraced in the formula, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Apparently, he recognizes that it will be impossible to evade the inequalities naturally existing between different individuals, and he endeavors to neutralize these natural advantages by supposing

that each is to produce "according to his ability."

But, my dear John, you mustn't be deluded by the suggestion that there is a difference in these propositions. In both cases, the neutralizing profits are to be taken from the most efficient producers and given to those who are less efficient. If this were done there would soon be an end to the Socialist promise that every worker is to get the full product of his labor. If this rule of remuneration were to become operative, the surplus product needed to supply the bad or idle worker with the means of securing a reward "according to his needs," would be stolen from the proceeds of the industry of the more capable "comrades."

Yet H. M. Hyndman, the prominent English Socialist, sees no objection to this arrangement. In a letter contributed to the London *Daily Telegraph* (October 14, 1907), Mr. Hyndman wrote:

"Socialism will recognize no difference as to the share of the general product between the 'good' and the 'bad' workman, but will give both every opportunity to make themselves more valuable citizens and comrades. Good and bad will alike be doing their social

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best for the community, and will be entitled to their full participation in the enjoyment of the wealth created by the work of the whole body."

Mr. Hyndman seems to assume that, under such a system of production, there would be enough to go round—enough to satisfy all the wants of every member of the community. Do you think this possible?

Suppose that Socialism were adopted tomorrow, and that you, knowing that your livelihood was assured, were working side by side with a man who was producing about half as much as you. Would the fact that his sloth and incapacity did not count against him inspire you to do your best work, especially when you realized that the surplus product of your toil was fated to compensate him for his failure to "make good"?

It makes little difference from what point of view Socialism attempts to solve its problem of remunerating the worker. No matter which course it pursues, it courts disaster. Whether it rewards all equally or continues to recognize the existence of natural inequalities, it remains a system under which freedom is impossible.

Do you like the prospect, John?

CHAPTER IX

A FEW "MINOR" DETAILS

My dear John,

When the Socialists promise to see that you get the full product of your labor, there are a few minor details which they overlook. Not the least of these is the detail as to how they are going to do it.

If you should ask your friend, the soap-box man, where he gets the figures which he reels off so glibly when he is talking to you about the way you are robbed, he may find it difficult to answer; but the difficulty he encounters when confronted with such a question is nothing in comparison to that which he will experience if you ask him to inform you how the Socialist bosses are going to figure out your labor value in a way to assure you against robbery. It is easy for him to say that under Socialism you will get all you produce, but don't let him get away with the idea that he can make such statements without being called upon to prove them.

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It is a beautiful promise, this assurance of Socialism that every worker in the Co-operative Commonwealth will get every penny that is represented in his labor. It is a beautiful promise; but lots of people have made beautiful promises and haven't kept them. Can it be possible that the bright little promiser who talks to you at the street corner is one of the "four-flushers," too?

Ask him the next time he invites questions. Tell him that you are a practical man, and that you want more definite details.

Do you know what he will tell you? He will use a lot of words rounded out into more or less eloquent periods, but, when you attempt to analyze what he has said, you will find that all his wisdom could have been expressed in a single sentence. In plain English, he tells you that your request for details is nothing more or less than "a mark of ignorance." He wants you to believe that Socialism's plan will be all right for everybody, because, as the old negro said, "it jes' works out so."

Well, perhaps it will! Let us see.

To test the truth of this theory, we must tackle one of the most difficult problems that

we shall be called upon to consider. But I think, if we are patient, we shall be able to get to the bottom of Marx's complicated methods of reasoning, and so show that even the promise to ascertain the full value of the worker's labor—to say nothing of the detail of giving it to him afterwards—is one of the most glaring absurdities in the whole Socialist scheme.

Marx tells us that value is determined by labor.

What does he mean?

He means that the value of a commodity is fixed by the labor that is put into it. This is all right as far as this statement goes, but it does not help us very much in determining the value of a particular commodity. Before we can know what a commodity is worth, we must know (according to Marx) what it cost to produce the mental and physical energy that was used in making it. To do this, we must first know the total cost of all the commodities which the worker consumed during the period when he was performing this particular task.

You know the old problem of the hen and the egg—which was first? The Socialist's labor-value puzzle is much more perplexing,

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because, in addition to a lot of other things, you are called upon to find out which was first, the worker or the commodity which he consumed—the clothes he wore, the food he ate, the bed in which he slept while acquiring the strength for the work that produced this commodity.

If you were called upon to answer this question, to fix the value of even a single article, you would find the task anything but an easy one. Can you imagine what will happen when the government functionaries sit down to figure out this problem for every kind of article that is sold—anywhere in the world?

But, don't imagine that their task ends here. When they have once succeeded in getting this puzzle solved, they will next be called upon to find out how many persons have contributed their labor toward the production of each and all of the commodities that have entered into the transaction.

Benedict Elder, in exposing this particular absurdity of Socialism in *The Common Cause* (September, 1912), illustrated his argument by showing the difficulties that the Socialist statisticians will face when they are called upon to find the value of the labor

necessary in producing an ordinary pin. As it is difficult to obtain a more striking example, we may well follow Mr. Elder's calculations.

To find the value of the labor of making a pin, it is necessary to begin by getting the exact time expended by every person who has contributed a necessary part towards the production of the pin. This includes the time of the man who sells the pin to you over the counter—for, of course, there will have to be salesmen under Socialism—the time spent by the miner who dug the metal from the earth and by every other individual who has had anything to do in handling it. Talk about tracing your ancestry back to the days of William the Conqueror—that would be a "cinch" compared to this kind of mental gymnastics!

Yet our Socialist statisticians are not finished with their work, even yet! Before they can tell the cashier how much to pay the worker so as to give him the full value of his labor in producing the pin, they must also determine how much labor-power each man spent in doing his part of this work and how many commodities, and how much of each, the man consumed to produce the labor-

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power necessary to complete the task assigned to him.

"Here," says Mr. Elder, "we have indeed a monumental undertaking, one that staggers the mind to contemplate, one that challenges a combination of figures to express. Yet we are not fairly started at our task. . . . We have taken but one commodity where the number of commodities is practically infinite. We cannot follow the Socialists many steps; their range becomes so vast, their intricacies so bewildering, their complications so overwhelming, the throne of reason would be threatened by the stupendous scale of thought demanded almost at the outset. It is said that a German scientist once undertook to figure out the number of possible moves on a chess-board. He reached a point where the combination of figures required could no longer be expressed in any known language, and then his mind unhinged. On the chess-board there are just thirty-two pieces to be moved on sixty-four spots."

The Socialist program may seem very plausible and extremely attractive when the Socialist propagandist is describing it in broad generalities and you do not examine

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its details too critically; but, when you get down to cases, John, and begin to try to find out how all these magnificent promises are to be kept, you will begin to feel that you are in danger of joining the German scientist whose "mind unhinged."

Just for the sake of argument, let us admit that the Socialist functionaries have finally succeeded in performing the apparently impossible task of ascertaining exactly how much your labor-time has been worth to the community. This fact equitably determined, the worker would probably be given labor checks, for which he could secure other things of equal value with his labor. For example, if it required 1,000,000 days' labor to provide this year's shoes for the community and 2,000,000 pairs of shoes were made in that time, we can imagine that a check for one day's labor might exchange for two pairs of shoes.

It is easy to see that it would require no small amount of book-keeping to keep even this matter of detail adjusted fairly, especially when we remember what intricate calculations are necessary to find out how many persons contributed to the production of these shoes, and how the value of the time

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of each worker must be figured. But the same difficulty would present itself with every kind of commodity in any way dependent upon the labor-power of man.

If the labor checks that each worker receives are to be of real value, they must be exchangeable for articles which the worker himself needs or thinks he needs. In other words, our Socialist officials are also to be called upon to ascertain what the public may be expected to demand. This does not mean merely the articles that are necessary to life—food, clothing, fuel, etc.—but everything that must be placed at the disposal of a man if he is to enjoy unrestricted freedom of choice as to the character of the articles which he purchases. Even the smallest thing must be considered—the boy's jumping-Jack and the button-boots for the doll baby; for it is not admitted that any wants of man—however small or great—are to be prohibited by the government.

The ordinary playthings of the child represent a demand upon raw material, and each of these demands must be considered in calculating the total production for which arrangements must be made in advance.

To accomplish this result the statistical

expert will be compelled to ascertain the actual needs of every family—indeed, of every individual from one end of the country to the other, if not throughout the entire world, since, of course, there would still be an interchange of products between the various lands. A statistical estimate based upon present conditions would be of little avail. To overcome the difficulty, an accurate schedule of every article that will be needed to meet the demands of the purchaser must be made.

The taking of a census is a long and laborious task, and to its completion years are devoted. Yet the census which the United States government takes is mere child's play compared with the schedules which will have to be filled out, arranged and digested, if all the small commodities which people want to buy, and which they buy to-day, are to be ascertained and tabulated in preparation for production.

As Cathrein points out ("Socialism," p. 270), it will be necessary to consider "the numerous articles of food which are required even in the humblest family, the supplying of the kitchen with fuel and cooking utensils, the fitting up of the drawing-room and

bedrooms with furniture and ornamentation, the lighting and heating, the stocking of the pantry, etc., besides the necessary repairs. There must be included the mending of clothes, furniture, etc. . . . The authorities will have to supply needle and thread to replace the missing shirt-button. All these items must be tabulated for the determination of the demand upon which the great system of production is to be based. And all this would have to be done not for one family alone, but for the millions of families which constitute a modern State and for everyone of their members. . . . Even a cursory glance at the immense department stores of our large cities with their thousands of different articles, will convince anyone of the great variety of modern requirements.

“Moreover, the social demand is not at all constant; it varies from month to month, from week to week, even from day to day. Many requirements cannot be foreseen in the least; suddenly and unexpectedly they make their presence felt. Weekly or even daily inquiries would become necessary, or at least there would be needed numerous offices where lists of requirements could be filed.

"However, it would not suffice to provide for single families. The needs of society at large, all the public requirements, would also have to be satisfied. In the first place would come the arrangements for transportation: streets and roads, bridges, railways, canals, vehicles of all kinds. The care of all this would be incumbent on the paternal State. What an amount of daily exertion to supply a large city with meat, milk, fruit, vegetables, etc. Private hotels would also be abolished. It would become the functions of public officials to provide shelter, food, and service for every comer, unless traveling is to be forbidden in the Socialist commonwealth. Then, again, the whole of the building business will be in the hands of the State. Public and private edifices, dwellings, schools, hospitals, insane asylums, storehouses, theatres, museums, public halls, post and telegraph offices, railroad stations, would have to be erected and kept in repair, or enlarged as necessity required. And these buildings could not be handed over to contractors as is generally done nowadays; the State alone could take care of drawing up the plans and specifications, of gathering the necessary materials and workmen, of di-

recting and supervising the erection. If the State is supposed to do all this systematically, without squandering an immense amount of labor and materials, the extent and quality of the requirements in the entire commonwealth must be ascertained long beforehand by some responsible authority.

“What the different cities and town administrations are doing now, and as a rule through private contractors, in the matter of streets, public health, water supply, lighting, baths, etc., would fall to the care of the State. Physicians, surgeons, druggists, nurses, midwives, would have to be appointed, and it would be incumbent upon the State to provide for the professional education of a sufficient number of people for all these offices. The State would have to find ways and means to take care of education, of the press, literature, arts, theatres, museums, etc. . . . To this would have to be added the management of the farms, vineyards, vegetable gardens, cattle and stock raising, the forests and fisheries, mining, smelting, and other industrial processes. In all these departments, the requirements would have to be accurately ascertained be-

fore there would be any question of a systematic regulation of production."

There are several important items that have been omitted, but it does not seem necessary to enumerate them. Enough has been shown to demonstrate that, to perform all this work and to compile such an overwhelming amount of statistical labor alone, a huge army of public officials will be required, and they must be public officials of such capability and integrity as not to be subject to the human weaknesses that are responsible for so many of the blunders in work of this kind—blunders that might prove fatal to the entire system of production and even threaten the very existence of the nation.

Do you think that human intelligence is equal to such a task? The soap-box orator may call your attention to the fact that this work is being done to-day. Yes, it is being done, but, as the Socialist so very often asserts, many of our worst evils are due to the fact that the work is being done so badly.

The Socialist also assures us that he will remedy all these evils, which means that Socialism will do the work much better than it is being performed at the present time. Do

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you think that this is possible? Do you believe that so gigantic a system of State machinery can be organized and made to operate without a hitch? Is it possible that a system of collective government composed of human units, all subject to human frailties, can perform what private enterprise, with its vast resources and its boundless ambition, has never been able to accomplish, especially when no hope of extra recompense stimulates these human units in the performance of their appointed tasks?

CHAPTER X

LABOR'S FULL PRODUCT

My dear Smith,

There is a good reason why the Socialists are unwilling to tell you just what their State will be, or how it will work. *They themselves do not know.*

You can divide the present-day Socialists into two classes. The best of them are utopian dreamers—theorists who hope that things will work out all right, and who are willing to take a chance. The worst of them are mere office-seekers, eager for place or pelf, and willing to become special pleaders for the oppressed in return for their votes.

There was a time when the Socialists were actuated by a high and unselfish ideal. It was a fallacious ideal, it is true. They were fighting for principles that would have worked the ruin of the nations had they been put into practice. But, as you know, a man can be both sincere and wrong at the same time. The early Socialists were sincere,

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even though they were wrong. But those Socialists of to-day who have turned the philosophy of Socialism into a purely political movement, and who do not ask you to believe as they do so long as you vote as they want you to vote, have neither high ideals nor good principles. They are just as bad political grafters as have ever been harbored by any of the old political parties.

If the Socialists do not know much about the practical operations of their utopian commonwealth, however, we can work out the problem for ourselves. All that it is necessary to do, John, is to collect the different pieces of the Socialist program and fit them together, just as you did the jigsaw puzzles with which you used to amuse yourself when a boy.

For example, let us take still another phase of the Socialist promise to see that every man shall get the full product of his labor.

The Socialists have been quick to realize that this fallacy is the best vote-catching device that they have yet invented. "You make it all," they explain, "and it is all yours."

"Yes, it is all yours!" they declare, "but

do you get it? No, you do not begin to get all of your earnings. If you are very lucky you may get one-third of what you earn; if you are less lucky, you have to be content with one-fifth. It is only under Socialism that you will get *all* your earnings."

This is the promise that Blatchford makes in "Merrie England" (p. 189). It is this that countless Socialist writers have promised. It is this promise that is used as a text by practically every soap-box orator in this country—or in any other, for that matter. "The right to the entire product of labor and capital together!" That is the main tenet of the gospel of Socialism.

Now, John, I am willing to admit for the sake of argument that there is considerable justice in the worker's demand for a larger portion of the output of his industry. Of course, we cannot admit that he is entitled to the entire output of labor and capital combined; but this point need not delay us long, since he never will get it. He can't expect to have the full product now, and he needn't expect to have it, even if Socialism triumphs and the modern system of private ownership is buried six feet underground. Neither Socialism nor any other system of

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production will ever be able to make this promise good.

Do you see what this means? It simply shows that the Socialist is trying to fool you with promises that can never be kept. He tells you that he will give you the entire value of the product. He does not tell you how he is going to find out how much it is, and he is also very careful to conceal the fact that, even if he knew exactly how much the value of your labor-time amounted to, he couldn't give you the full amount that you produce. He couldn't do it to-day, nor a hundred years from to-day, nor a million years from to-day, simply because it is a proposition that is just as impossible as to make 2 plus 2 equal 5.

While the great mass of Socialist writers and speakers are so unscrupulous that they continue to agree to espouse a policy which they know they can never fulfil, there are other Socialists who are more honest and who frankly admit that this program is entirely impracticable. The latter are not the Socialists whose writings are exploited for the instruction of possible converts, however. When a man has caught Socialism and caught it bad, it is safe for him to read what

they have written; but, for the beginner, it is best to feed him on the pre-digested and carefully censored output of the propaganda committees.

The soap-box orator informs you that under Socialism all industry will be owned collectively and will be conducted in the interests of the workers exclusively. What does the worker imagine that this means? He pictures himself as a part owner of the factory in which he works. He sees himself dividing the profits of that manufacturing concern with the 50 or 100 or 500 persons now constituting the working force of the establishment. Believing that this is what Socialism promises to do for him, he becomes interested immediately. Naturally the soap-box orator doesn't try to correct this impression.

Sydney Webb, however, tells a different story. He knows that Socialism does not intend to do anything of this kind. Turn to "Fabian Tract No. 51" (p. 16), and you will read the following:

"The whole of our creed is that industry should be carried on, not for the profit of those engaged in it, whether masters or men, but for the benefit of the community. We

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recognize no special right in the miners as such to enjoy the mineral wealth on which they work. The Leicester boot operatives can put in no special claim to the profits of the Leicester boot factory, nor the shop-man in the co-operative store for the surplus of its year's trading. It is not for the miners, bootmakers, or shop-assistants, as such, that we Socialists claim the control and the profits of industry, but for the citizens."

This is quite a different proposition, isn't it? Socialism doesn't mean that you are to be permitted to turn the factory in which you work into a profit-producing concern for your own benefit. It does mean, however, that the profit produced by all the concerns in the entire country shall be lumped together, and, after all the losses and necessary charges have been deducted, the sum left shall be divided among all the people—a system under which you would receive one-fifty, one-seventy or one-ninety millionth part, according to the population of the nation.

This puts the matter in a less attractive light, but we have by no means fully disclosed the iniquity of those who are trying to fool the voters with false promises. Let

us now try to find out what charges must be deducted from the total profits before this division can be made.

Not all businesses are to-day successful. Some of them fail because the people do not buy the articles which it was expected they would buy, and it is quite possible that such mistakes might be made under Socialism. It is entirely probable that some kind of mistakes would be made, and that there would be approximately as great a proportion of losses with collective management as we now have under individual management. These items would, of course, have to be deducted before the division of profits could be effected.

The Socialists claim that a large part of the profits of which the worker is robbed, goes to meet the expenses of rent and interest, two factors that would not have to be considered in the Co-operative Commonwealth. They do not seem to take into account the fact that the money applied to rent, interest and profit is not stored away, or otherwise taken out of circulation, even to-day. The greater part of this sum finds its way back to industry by providing for extensions in business, renewals of ma-

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chinery, enlargements of factories, and the establishment of new industries.

There are items of expense that we cannot dodge even under Socialism. Factories and machinery do not last forever. New methods must constantly be adopted. An ever-increasing popular demand necessitates an extension of manufacturing facilities. Do the Socialists expect us to believe that, on the establishment of the Co-operative Commonwealth, everything will be income and there will be no outlay—all profit and no expenses?

Then we must provide for the payment of the huge army of Socialist officials, for there will be practically no end to the number of overseers, superintendents, clerks, bookkeepers, auditors, cashiers, and statisticians—to say nothing of the host of minor officials—all of whom will have to be paid at the same rate, to say the least, as the laborers.

In talking about this kind of workers to-day, the Socialist agitator is very apt to dub them a “non-producing class.” If you will examine Socialist statistics carefully, you will find that the statisticians almost invariably omit to consider the amount paid

such workers as an item of expense; that they are even likely to include the sum represented by these salaries in the *profits* of the employing class. Should the time ever come when the Socialists themselves are called upon to provide the pay-roll for the nation, they will discover that the directive and executive workers, and all the persons employed to carry out their part of the program, will call for the expenditure of a tremendous sum of money. Tremendous as this amount would be to-day, however, the present outlay for this purpose would be but a drop in the bucket compared to the cost of the system that Socialism would have to establish.

Let us see what the Socialists themselves—the more frank and honest kind of Socialists—have to say about this matter.

Deville in “Socialism, Internationalism and Revolution,” says: “After deducting from the product a portion to take the place of taxes, a portion to replace the labor consumed, one to extend the scale of production, one to insure against disasters, as floods, winds, lightning, etc., one to support the incapable, one for administration, one for sani-

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tation, one for education, etc., the producers of both sexes will distribute the balance among themselves in proportion of the quantity of ordinary labor respectively furnished."

Mrs. Besant, in "Fabian Essays" (p. 163), has very similar ideas upon this point. She says:

"Out of the value of the communal produce must come rent of land payable to the local authorities, rent of plant needed for working of industries, wages advanced and fixed in the usual way, taxes, reserve fund, accumulation fund, and the other charges necessary for the carrying on of the communal business. All these deducted, the remaining value should be divided among the communal workers as a 'bonus.'"

A "bonus"? Yes, but would there be any bonus? These who are familiar with the history of the labor movement in France will naturally recall Louis Blanc's unfortunate experiment with the National workshops.

In 1848 the Provisional Government issued a proclamation engaging to guarantee work to all citizens and promising to put an end to the sufferings of workmen by de-

creeing the formation of a permanent Commission for the workers.

Louis Blanc, who was at the head of this movement to abolish all profits of capital and to establish the perfect equality of all workers "without considering skill or activity," developed the National Workshops scheme. At first the workmen threw themselves into the project with great heartiness, even working overtime; but this was merely a temporary condition. To aid the great tailoring workshop, the government gave it an order to provide 25,000 uniforms for the National Guard. The building in which the work was conducted was provided absolutely free of cost and the government advanced all the capital required in the experiment. The price agreed upon was to be eleven francs per uniform. Each of the 1,500 workmen was given two francs a day as "subsistence money," and was promised his *pro rata* share in the profits.

But there were no profits. Instead, the uniforms actually cost, when finished, sixteen francs apiece, and the government had to stand the loss. You may read the whole story of the commercial disaster which the attempt to introduce collective ownership

brought upon France. The experiment ended in a panic such as the nation had never known, and the revolt of the workmen which followed was suppressed by the troops only after 10,000 persons had been killed or wounded.

Don't you think that I am right when I say that it will take something more than the mere assertion of a Deville or an Annie Besant to persuade a sane and sensible people that collective ownership is more practical to-day than it was some sixty years ago?

The admissions that these Socialists have made seem conclusively frank; yet Richardson, in "Industrial Problems" (p. 179), gives us a concrete example that may throw an additional sidelight upon the situation. He says:

"In a Socialist State, if a laborer in ten hours can produce five pairs of shoes, he could not have as his reward for that labor five pairs of shoes. For while he was making these shoes, educational work had to be done, hospitals had to be operated, the mentally and physically incapable had to be cared for—all socially necessary labor had to be

carried on; and the cost of the maintenance of these things is a part of the cost of the social product."

Richardson goes on to calculate how much the shoemaker "might get" for his product; but he entirely overlooks the very grave possibility that after all the items which Mrs. Besant and he have enumerated, and all of Deville's "etcetera" have been deducted, the worker "might get" nothing at all.

In short, are we not justified in questioning the wisdom of this scheme? Under the present system the wages of a worker represents a first charge against the business, and profits, interests and rent can be paid only out of what is left (if anything is left) after he has secured his share.

The adoption of the Socialist system would change all this. The worker might get a beggarly "subsistence wage," to keep him alive and able to work, but nothing else would be paid to him until all the expenses of the State, including the cost of its numberless agents and officials, had been deducted. Justly does Schaffle say ("The Quintessence of Socialism," p. 122): "The

leading promise of social democracy is practically and theoretically untenable; it is a delusive bait for the extreme individualistic fanatic craving for equality among the masses."

After seeing all this, John, do you think it possible that the condition of the worker could be improved by the adoption of Socialist methods? In view of the very dubious prospect of a possible "bonus," what do you think of a man who would go to the lengths that Spargo goes in his attempt to befuddle the brain of those who are too ignorant, or too careless, to investigate this question for themselves. Under Socialism, Spargo says ("Socialism," p. 236): "If Jones prefers *objets d'art*, and Smith prefers fast horses or a steam yacht, each will be free to follow his inclination so far as his resources will permit."

Let us be thankful for this concession! We shall in this respect, at least, be no worse off than we are to-day. At the present moment Jones can buy his art objects, and Smith his fast horses or his steam yacht, if the "resources" of Smith and Jones will permit. The question in which we are interested, John, is not what you and Jones *will*

be permitted to do, but what you *will be able* to do, and I sadly fear that Spargo, who must know the logical effects of Socialism, had a good laugh at your expense when he penned those words.

CHAPTER XI

IS WRETCHEDNESS INCREASING?

My dear John,

If you listen to a Socialist speaker, or pick up a Socialist periodical, you are pretty certain to come face to face with the assertion that "the poor are now growing poorer and the rich richer every day." If you ask for further particulars, you will soon discover that the chief reason why Socialists believe that this is what is happening is because Karl Marx predicted that it is what was going to happen.

The great founder of Socialism was very certain that the development of capitalism would tend to produce constantly-increasing "wretchedness, oppression, slavery, degeneracy, and exploitation" of the working class ("Capital," p. 790) ; and while a few writers, like Kirkup in the "History of Socialism" (p. 386), admit that "Marx made a serious mistake," because "facts and reasonable expectations combine clearly to indicate that

the democracy . . . is marked by a growing intellectual, moral and political capacity, and by an *increasing freedom and prosperity*," the great mass of Socialists agree with Snowden's assertion ("The Socialist's Budget," p. 8) that "the few cannot be rich without making the many poor."

This principle, formulated by Marx, is known as "the law of the concentration of capital," and, if we are to accept this formula, we must be able to prove that capital is being concentrated "in the hands of a smaller and smaller number of capitalists, that large fortunes are created at the expense of smaller fortunes, and that great capitalists are increased by the extinction of small ones" (Tcherkesoff, "Pages of Socialist History," p. 23).

In a few words, Marx insisted that capitalism was dividing the world into two classes—the owning class and the toiling class—and that the third, or middle class, was rapidly being eliminated, some few of its members being absorbed into the upper-class while the great majority, becoming impoverished, were destined to sink to the lowest of proletarian depths.

But is this what has happened in the half

a century or so that has passed since Marx formulated this "law of capitalistic development"? If this "law" is ever to prove itself true, it is time, as Tcherkesoff says, "that it should be exemplified by at least some few economic phenomena"; yet during this period the number of small capitalists not only has not diminished, but has actually increased, while the doctrine of increasing misery, instead of being verified, is contradicted by indisputable statistics which show, as Professor Hatton has asserted (in his Cleveland, Ohio, debate), that "there is an increasing betterment in the condition of the laboring classes." Certainly none but a most prejudiced Socialist will assert that there is any tangible evidence to indicate that the people are dividing into two hostile camps, especially in view of the fact—so easily demonstrated—that fully 90 per cent. of the capitalists, big and little, have come from the ranks of the workers, while the number of small investors increases with such leaps and bounds as almost to defy the efforts of the statistician to keep pace with them. It was these undeniable facts that compelled Bernstein, though a Socialist, to take issue with Marx. He saw that there

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was no "increasing misery" of the masses, that the wealth of the world was not being centralized in a few hands; but that, instead, the number of the possessing classes grows absolutely and relatively.

In all my letters, John, I have tried to avoid such things as abstruse theories and dry statistics, but we have at last reached a point where statistics are necessary if we are to get a clear view of the situation. Such statistics are necessary, not only because they show the absurdity of Marx's predictions, but also for the reason that without this knowledge we should be unable to protect ourselves against the false testimony that Socialists are so ready to introduce as "facts."

For example, John Spargo (in "Socialism") quotes Lucien Sanial as authority for the statement that, in 1900, there were 250,251 persons in the United States who possessed \$67,000,000,000, "out of a total of \$95,000,000,000, given as the national wealth; that is to say, .9 of one per cent of the total number in all occupations owned 70.5 per cent of the total national wealth. The middle class, consisting of 8,429,845 persons, being 29 per cent of the total number in all occupations, owned \$24,000,000,-

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000, or 25.3 per cent of the total national wealth. The lowest class, the proletariat, consisting of 20,393,137 persons, being 70.1 per cent of the total number in all occupations, owned but \$4,000,000,000, or 4.2 per cent of the total wealth." In brief: "Of the 29,073,233 persons ten years old and over engaged in occupations, .9 of 1 per cent own 70.5 per cent of total wealth."

Mr. Spargo asks us to accept these figures as true because Mr. Sanial, "an expert statistician," says that they are authentic. Don't let him fool you, John. Mr. Sanial simply "guesses" that his statistics are reliable, and, as he is a "red card" Socialist, he must either tell us just where he got his authority for these figures or be ruled out of court as a prejudiced "guesser."

And he can't do it. He can't do it, simply because there are no census records, or other official figures, upon which to base his statistics on wealth distribution between the classes, no accurate information upon this subject within the reach of any human being. Yet it is upon such "evidence" that Socialists rely to prove that Marx was a true prophet!

But this is an old trick. As Stuart P.

West says (*The Common Cause*, June, 1912), "the Socialist of the agitator-demagogue type has no fine sensibilities about making his statements square with painstaking inquiries into the truth. He makes broad assertions, backing them up with a few statistics which are partly guess-work, partly half-truths, and relies upon the lack of information among his audience to do the rest."

So much for the unreliable character of Socialist figures in general. Now, let us get down to facts.

The Erfurt platform (1891) repeated Marx's assertion that among the workers there is a "growing insecurity of existence, misery, oppression, slavery, degradation and exploitation." If you thought that this might be true, John, what would you expect to find? That the worker was being pressed closer to the wall, would you not? That wages increased slowly, so slowly as scarcely to approximate the bare cost of subsistence; that there was a more rapid extension of the hours of labor, with pauperism a general rather than an exceptional condition. Let us see.

In the United States, wages have prac-

tically doubled since 1860 and the hours of labor have decreased from 15 to 30 per cent. In Norway, Sweden, Germany, Japan, and several other countries, the increase in wages since 1860 has also been fully (where not more than) 100 per cent, while the hours of labor, especially since 1890, have shown a tendency toward improvement consistent with such progress in the United States (cf. *The Common Cause*, loc. cit.).

The statistics on pauperism afford quite as telling an argument against Marx's prediction of the increasing misery. In the United States, in 1886, the ratio of paupers was 116.6 to each one hundred thousand inhabitants. In 1903 the ratio had decreased to 101.4 per each one hundred thousand inhabitants.

In England the figures are even more impressive, for the ratio of paupers fell from 62.7 per one thousand inhabitants in 1849 to 26.2 in 1905. As Mr. West says: "There were actually 200,000 fewer paupers in 1905 than in 1849, although the population of the country during these fifty-six years almost doubled, and this in the face of the Marxian predictions."

But if Marx missed fire in his prophesy

regarding the general labor situation, does not the "trustification of industry" show that he was right in the prediction that the wealth of the world was to be concentrated in the hands of the few? Not at all. The census figures of manufactures in the United States—and these figures are representative of world conditions in manufacturing—prove conclusively that the small establishments are not being crushed out of existence. It is true that there has been a steady concentration of industries through the organization of the combinations known as "trusts," and if it could be shown that this concentration meant that the ownership of all the industries was falling into the hands of a smaller number of persons, there might be some ground for the Socialist contention that the few are absorbing the wealth of the many.

Ten years ago it looked as if this was what was happening, but, during the past decade, the ownership of these corporations has changed so completely that there can no longer be any doubt concerning the outcome. Instead of being a device to promote the cause of Socialism by concentrating the wealth of the nation in the hands of a few

interests, the modern "trust" has become in reality an agency for the diffusion of wealth.

Of course, as you know, John, a corporation—even a "trust"—is owned by those who hold its stock. Every shareholder is a partner in the concern; so, when we find that, instead of being owned by fewer persons, the stock is distributed among increasing thousands of persons, it is difficult to see where there is any evidence of marked concentration of industrial wealth.

If you take, for example, the great railway systems, you will find that, whereas in 1901 nine of the leading roads were owned by 50,000 stockholders, in 1911 the stock in these companies was held by 118,000 persons. In 1901 the stock in the fifteen industrial corporations—popularly termed "trusts"—was held by 82,000 persons; in 1911 more than 247,000 individuals owned the stock in these companies.

Think for a moment what these figures mean. "Twenty years ago," said Mr. West (*The Common Cause*, August, 1912), "before the movement of combinations had begun, the steel properties of this country were owned by not more than 5,000 persons." (That might well be called "concentration

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of industrial wealth," John!) "Now the Steel Corporation, which at the highest estimate does not represent more than 60 per cent of the steel production of the United States, is owned by 150,000 persons." As another writer recently said: "If the attorney-general should succeed in destroying the value of the Steel Corporation's securities, he would not only deprive thousands of the provision they have made against old age, but stop the wholesome movement that is making for the *popular ownership of the big corporations and thus for the checking of dangerous wealth concentration.*"

You see how little evidence there is in support of the Socialist "law" of concentration.

Another contention of Marx and his followers is that concentration will also show itself in the principal industry of humanity—agriculture. Do the facts support this prediction? Certainly, not in England, or in any other country in Europe. But how about the farmers of the United States? Are they being absorbed and enslaved by a few capitalists?

Once upon a time there was reason to fear that agriculture was to be concentrated in

the "bonanza" farms, but the years have gone and the danger is past, "bonanza" farming having proved a failure. Instead, we now have "intensive" farming—a method of raising crops that calls for smaller, rather than larger, farms.

To get a clear view of the agricultural situation in this country, we shall not go back in the records to the date of Marx's prediction. Such figures would "show him up" in so ridiculous a light that I haven't the heart to subject his prophesy to this test. Instead, we will simply retrace our steps to 1900, when we find that there were 5,737,372 farms in the United States, the average size being 146.2 acres. In 1910—just ten years later—the number of farms had increased to 6,340,357, and the average holdings had decreased to 138 acres.

If you desire to examine more detailed statistics, turn to *The Common Cause*, (July, 1912), and read the evidence that Mr. West has accumulated. "While the so-called law of concentration fails absolutely to work out under these acreage statistics," he says, "its failure is still more complete when we compare the movement of acreage with the movement of farm values. The

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average number of acres in the farm came down from 146 in 1900 to 138 in 1910; but farm land (exclusive of buildings), which was valued at \$13,100,000,000 in 1900, rose to \$28,400,000,000 in 1910, an increase of 117.4 per cent. In other words, the farm wealth of the country more than doubled during the ten-year period while the average size of farm holdings considerably decreased. The conclusion from these figures is, of course, inevitable: not only has there been no concentration of wealth in land but, on the contrary, there has been an astonishingly great and rapid diffusion of wealth."

Even Spargo, who is admittedly a well-informed Socialist, recognizes the weakness of the Marxian theory when applied to agriculture, for he says ("Socialism," p. 134): "One thing seems certain, namely that farm ownership is not on the decline. It is not being supplanted by tenantry: the small farms are not being absorbed by larger ones."

This is in direct contradiction to the assertions of the majority of Socialist agitators. With voice and pen they are still predicting the downfall of the farmer, and this in spite of the frank admissions of the more

fair-minded and informed Socialists that the conditions they describe do not exist.

Quite as contrary to the facts are the Socialist assertions that the slight increase in the proportion of mortgaged farms is proof of the absorption of American farms by the "interests." In asking us to believe that this is what is happening, Socialists assume that we are so ignorant as to real conditions that we can credit the theory that a mortgage is an inevitable shortcut to bankruptcy, when, as a matter of fact, it is more often the means by which the farmer rises from the ranks of tenantry to the property-owning class. Indeed, Spargo himself admits that this is so. In "Socialism" (p. 134), he says: "Now while a mortgage is certainly not suggestive of independence, it may be either a sign of decreasing or increasing independence. It may be a step toward the ultimate loss of one's farm or a step toward the ultimate ownership of one. Much that has been written by Populist and Socialist pamphleteers and editors upon this subject has been based upon the entirely erroneous assumption that a mortgaged farm meant loss of economic independence, whereas it often happens that it is a step towards it."

Having seen how all the predictions of Marx break down when put to the test of practical experience, we shall now consider one more fatal mistake made by this great prophet of "scientific" Socialism. This is what we may term the "verge of starvation" theory.

According to this doctrine of the Socialists, the accumulation of misery is keeping pace so literally with the accumulation of wealth that the great mass of the workers are constantly sinking deeper and deeper below the conditions of existence of their own class (see "Communist Manifesto"). As a result, it is asserted, there are to-day but comparatively few workers who are more than a week or two removed from destitution, whereas, as Skelton shows ("Socialism: A Critical Analysis," p. 147), "no social fact is better established than that the forty years which have passed since Marx penned this dismal forecast have brought the working classes in every civilized country not increasing degradation, misery, and enslavement, but increasing material welfare, freedom and opportunity of development."

How is it in your case, John? Are you living on the verge of starvation? If you

were to be taken ill, or were to lose your job, would your family be on the town within a week or two? I thought not, and what is true in your case, is just as true in the majority of cases.

There are statistics, too—and plenty of them—to prove that the Socialists have an entirely erroneous impression of the financial condition of the “masses.” First, let us take the savings bank deposits; for, as you know, it is in this kind of a bank that the worker usually puts his savings for safe keeping. The very rich do not bother with a string of little accounts, and, accordingly, savings bank deposits have always been accepted as a measure of the wealth of the people of small or moderate means. Admitting this, what do we find? That, in 1911, more than one in every ten persons in the United States—counting all men, women and children—possessed a bank account, the total amount of these accounts being no less than \$4,212,584,000.

The building and loan associations affords another means of deposit for the savings of the worker, and, in 1911, the number of persons who held shares in and paid dues to such associations was nearly 2,200,000, the

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total assets of the societies being but a trifle less than one billion dollars.

If these facts are not sufficient, study the workers themselves; see how they live and how they spend their money, and then ask yourself if the Socialist is telling the truth when he says that this class of citizens do not share in the increasing prosperity of the nation.

The workers live far better to-day than the so-called middle class was able to live half a century ago. As Willey states ("Laborer and the Capitalist," p. 190), there are servant girls at the present time who own jewelry that costs more money than our grandmothers could afford to spend for a wedding dress (quoted by Kress, "Questions of Socialists," p. 22).

In addition to living under so much better conditions that most of the workers now enjoy luxuries that the so-called well-to-do could ill have afforded half a century ago, this class of citizens still manages to find money for several other things. For example, the immigrant workers succeed in saving enough out of their wages to send the vast sum of \$300,000,000 to foreign countries every year, while the enormous sums

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spent by the workers each year in picture shows, candy and for drink in the saloons would be sufficient to start every homeless man in America upon the high road to the ownership of a home.

Talk about locks and bolts against the masses, John—bars to prevent them from enjoying the good things of life! Why, there would be none of these good things of life—no enjoyment, no freedom of any kind—under a system that placed a premium on laziness and saved its highest rewards for the bosses—and that is what Socialism would do!

CHAPTER XII

THE CLASS STRUGGLE

My dear John,

It is almost impossible to find a Socialist agitator who does not lay great stress upon the "class struggle." I cannot remember having listened to a single one of these gentry who has not asserted that his "clear view of the economic situation" dates from the hour when he first become "class-conscious"; and I do not think that many Socialists will deny the statement that fully four-fifths of the militant propaganda is an attempt to arouse the workers to this sense of "class-consciousness."

Of course, the Socialists want you to believe that the revolution they are preaching is really an evolutionary process by means of the ballot. But, as you must have noticed, John, their promise of peaceful methods is not borne out by the gospel of class-hatred which they preach under the name of "the class struggle." It is "class war" that they

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are trying to incite; and in this, as one writer has said, "evolutionary Socialists closely rival, even if they do not always equal, the members of the revolutionary organizations. . . . *No graver mistake, therefore, could be made in diagnosing Socialism than to regard evolutionary Socialists (so-called) as opposed to revolutionary methods.* The whole gospel of the 'class war' as commonly preached by Socialists . . . is a direct and malicious incitement to the ignorant to adopt revolutionary methods" ("A Case Against Socialism," p. 101).

There are lots of things in Socialism that a man doesn't have to believe in order to be a Socialist, but class-consciousness is not one of them. Before he can sign up, before he can get his red card, he must affix his signature to a document in which he admits that he recognizes the existence of a class struggle.

Marx and Engels formulated this doctrine and preached it in their "Communist Manifesto," where they said:

"The history of all past society is the history of class antagonism, which took different forms in different epochs. But whatever form they may have taken, the exploi-

tation of one section of society by another is a fact common to all previous centuries.

. . . The first step in the working-class revolution is the raising of the proletariat [workers] to the position of the ruling class.

. . . The proletariat will use its political power to wrest by degrees all capital from the bourgeoisie [employers] to centralize all instruments of production in the hands of the State, *i. e.* of the proletariat organized as the ruling class. . . . If the proletariat, forced by its struggle against the bourgeoisie to organize as a class, makes itself by a revolution the ruling class, and, as the ruling class, destroys by force the old conditions of production, it destroys along with these conditions of production the conditions of existence of class antagonism, class in general, and therewith its own domination as a class" (pp. 20, 21).

Here we have the doctrine of class-war in a nutshell. Believing that the wealth of the world in every kind was destined to become concentrated in the hands of the few, and that all the people would of necessity be divided into two distinct classes, with absolutely antagonistic interests, Marx assumed that a class-war must result—the pro-

letariat, or wage-earning class, waging war with the property-owning class to compel the latter to give back the property it had stolen and restore liberty to the "enslaved worker."

As you can see, John, the doctrine of the class-war is necessarily one of the foundation stones of the Socialist gospel. Ferri recognized its importance as you may ascertain if you will turn to page 145 of his "Socialism and Positive Science," where he says:

"The other sociological theory by which Karl Marx has really dissipated the clouds, which obscured till now the heaven of Socialist aspirations, and which has furnished to scientific Socialism the political compass for steering itself with complete assurance in the contentions of the life of every day, is the great historic law of the class struggle."

The *Manifesto* of the Socialist Party of Great Britain takes the same stand when it says that "the Socialists say that the present form of property-holding divides society into two great classes"; while the Social Democratic party of England repeats Marx's assertion that "the history of human society is a history of class struggles arising from

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the antagonism of class interests," and appeals to the workers to make themselves "masters of their own country and of all the resources, political and material" (Quelch, "The Social Democratic Party").

"There are in reality but two classes," says the *Socialist Standard* (December, 1907), "those who live by labor and those who live upon those who labor—the two classes of exploiter and exploited."

Here, then, is the crux of the whole question. The workers are told that they are being robbed and exploited by the capitalists, and that there can be nothing in common between the two classes. "The task before us is not to appeal to the capitalist class to do something, but to organize the workers for the overthrow of that class, so they (the workers) may do something for themselves. The battle cry of the workers' party is not 'the right to work,' but 'the right to the product of our labor,' and the right waits only upon their might" (*Socialist Standard*, November 1, 1908).

"The Capitalist class, in its mad race for profits," says the American Socialist party platform (1908), "is bound to exploit the workers to the very limit of their endurance,

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and to sacrifice their physical, moral and mental welfare to its own insatiable greed."

If we turn to France, we find Jaurès ("Studies in Socialism") preaching the same doctrine. "Society," he says, "is to-day divided into classes with opposing interests, one class owning the means of life and the other nothing but their power to work. Never in the history of Society was the working class so free from all traces of property as to-day."

I might go on indefinitely citing the words of prominent Socialists who have preached Marx's doctrine of class hatred; but, as the whole story is summed up by our own "Rev." George D. Herron, I shall (as a final example) permit him to tell us what the class-struggle means to the Socialists. He says:

"There are no words that can make this fact hideous and ghastly enough, or vivid and revolutionary enough—the fact that society and its institutions are organized for the purpose of enabling some people to live off of other people, the few to live off the many. There is no language realistic enough, or possessed of sufficient integrity, to lay bare the chasm between the class that

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works and the class that reaps the fruit of that work; between the class that is grist for the great world-mill of economic might and the class that harvests that grist. And until the working class becomes conscious of itself as the only class that has a right to be, until the worker understands that he is exploited and bound by the power which his own unpaid labor places in the hands that exploit and bind him. . . . our dreams and schemes of a common good or better society are but philistine utopias, our social and industrial reforms but self-deceit, and our weapons but the shadows of stupidity and hypocrisy" ("From Revolution to Revolution," p. 3).

Now, John, as a matter of fact, have you in your experience as a working man ever run across the class struggle as Socialists define it?

I have put this question to scores of workers and the answer has always been the same. Not one of them, unless he happened to be a red-card Socialist who took the "class struggle" on faith, has ever found the class-consciousness out of which the revolution is to generate.

I do not deny that there is such a factor

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as class-interest in the industrial world. We see this interest exhibited in the industrial struggles that are almost daily taking place. The labor organizations are evidence of the existence of a class interest, but, beyond this, there is no class consciousness other than that which is incited by the Socialist agitators in the hope that they may tempt the worker to deeds of violence.

Think of it, John! The Socialist agitator must know, if he has even ordinary common sense, that the worker is not entitled to the whole product of labor—that it is not labor that finally fixes the value of a commodity. Yet, basing his arguments upon this self-evident fallacy, he calls upon the workers to unite and overthrow the present industrial system that they may take back from their employers the capital “of which they have been robbed.”

Nor will any real Socialist deny that this is the purpose of their propaganda. Even Hyndman, who is anything but a rank revolutionist, said in his celebrated debate, “Will Socialism Benefit the English People?”: “We are accused of preaching discontent and stirring up actual conflict. *We do*

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preach discontent, and we mean, if we can, to stir up actual conflict."

After this frank admission you will probably not be surprised to read Jack London's declaration of war:

"We intend nothing less than to destroy existing society and to take the whole world. If the law of the land permits, we fight for this end peaceably, at the ballot box. If the law of the land does not permit the peaceful destruction of society, and if we have force meted out to us, we resort to force ourselves. In Russia the Revolutionists kill the officers of the Government. I am a Revolutionist."

And Harry Quelch, in *Justice* (October 21, 1893), voiced just as crude an expression of the Marxian "gospel of hate":

"We are prepared to use any means, any weapon—from the ballot-box to the bomb; from organized voting to organized revolt; from parliamentary contests to political assassination—which opportunity offers and which will help in the end we have in view. Let this be understood, we have absolutely no scruples as to the means to be employed."

Frankly: Do you hate your employer? Would you harm a hair of his head even if

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you had the chance? Do you curse him whenever you think of him, crying with Archibald Crawford: "*Damn the Boss! Damn the Boss's son! Damn his family carriage! And damn his family, too!*"? Do you think that Herron knows what he is talking about when he says that "our whole system of life and labor, with all that we call civilization is based on nothing else than war . . . a war so terrible, so full of death, that its blood is upon every human hand, upon every loaf of bread, and upon every human institution"? Do you agree with the conclusion that it is "only folly, or worse, falsehood, that prates of peace in such a society"? (Quoted by *The Revolt*, April 25, 1912.)

Yet this is but a sample of the "truth" as it is taught from the soap-box. Wherever there is a militant propagandist, you will hear this kind of an appeal. "In fact, the repetition of the bitter denunciation of society is so constant," says Peter W. Collins (*The Common Cause*, January, 1912), "that on the mind of him who becomes an attendant at the soap-box, this doctrine of class-hatred, of enmity among men, gradually sinks into the mind and heart and the

poison does its work, as the dripping of water wears away a stone."

This is what the Socialist wants. His prime object is to create a force among the toilers that may be welded into a great revolutionary movement. In this appeal slumber the darkest and the most cruel instincts of man's nature.

There is no room in this country for class-hatred. It does not exist outside of the ranks of the Socialists. There is, in fact, more class-hatred shown by the rival factions in the Socialist movement in their squabbles with one another, than there is between employer and employe. Yet, by means of cunning misrepresentation and perversion of facts, all who come under the influence of Socialism—even the children in the Socialist Sunday schools—are made to take this wrong outlook upon life; their mental balance is upset; they are incited to develop a feeling of bitter hatred against those from whom they have suffered no harm. In this way, by sowing the poisonous seed of prejudice and class-hatred, it is hoped later on to reap the harvest of **THE REVOLUTION.**

CHAPTER XIII

SHALL WE TAKE IT OR PAY FOR IT?

My dear John,

While some of the more mild-mannered advocates of Socialism will try to make you believe that the change from private ownership to collective ownership will be accomplished without confiscating anybody's property, there are few among the authoritative Marxists who consider such a course, even as a remote possibility. Marx didn't think that it could be done, as you will see if you will turn to Engels "Preface" to the English translation of "Capital" (p. xiv), and in this theory he is supported by almost every Socialist apologist of note. Once in a while we encounter a socialistic writer who proposes to compensate owners if they will permit themselves to be expropriated "with a good grace," a theory which assumes that, if the owners of property are not entirely willing that their possessions shall be taken away from them, they will be punished by being

forcibly deprived of their goods, whether they like it or not.

And, if you want still more corroborative testimony, turn to "The Ethics of Socialism," by Belfort Bax, and on pages 127 and 128 you will read: "The Socialist has a distinct aim in view. If he can carry the initial stages towards his realization by means of the count-of-heads majority, by all means let him do so. If, on the other hand, he sees the possibility of carrying a salient portion of his program by trampling on that majority, by all means let him do this also."

Not long ago I discussed this question with one of the conservative Socialists who believe that those who own property will be very glad to help on the new régime by relinquishing their possessions.

"You are mistaken," he said. "We do not intend to confiscate. We shall pay for everything we take. The worst we shall do is to compel the capitalists to give us their property at the price which the commission of awards sets as a fair return."

"But will not that defeat your whole scheme?" I asked. "If you give the owners of productive capital a fair monetary return for their property, would you not auto-

matically create a set of class distinctions that would be quite as pronounced as those which exist to-day?"

"Oh," he said, "we do not propose to give them for their property money that they could invest; we shall give them bonds."

"How does that make any difference?" I persisted. "Interest-bearing bonds would have a more definite effect than actual money. By giving such bonds you would establish a perpetually-idle class, and so defeat the aims of your movement."

"But the bonds will not bear interest," he replied. "Interest is usury—a crime which will not be permitted in the Socialist State. As Leatham says (*"The Class War,"* p. 11): 'Everyone who lends his neighbor £5 and exacts £5 5s. in return is a criminal.' Holders of bonds may dispose of them, if they can find anybody who is foolish enough to want to hoard money, but—once the value of the bonds has been spent—that will end the matter, and we shall have eliminated the property-possessing parasites without violence or 'confiscation.'"

Is it possible to conceive of a more one-sided arrangement? Valuable property is to be taken from its owners and in return

they are to be given bonds which may or may not possess real value. In case nobody can be found to purchase them, the possessors will have to be content with the satisfaction of framing the certificates as evidence that they were once members of an "exploiting class."

In this, however, the Socialists are really most logical. To take wealth from a citizen in one kind would be the height of folly, if the same wealth were promptly returned to him in another kind. Such a transfer of productive property would mean nothing to the community. The only way in which the Socialist scheme can be carried out is to eliminate entirely all private rights in property used for purposes of production, distribution and exchange. If we admit the Socialist contention that labor is entitled to all value produced, no matter how it is produced, and that the worker is now the victim of spoliation, the only logical attitude is a defence of confiscation.

Most Socialists assume this position and excuse it on the ground that such an act on the part of the Co-operative State would be eminently just.

Rev. Charles H. Vail, in "Modern Social-

ism" (p. 152), upholds this method of reasoning. "As to the confiscation of property," he says, "the misconception here relates to the justice of confiscation, and is due to a failure to comprehend the nature of capitalist accumulations. The Socialist contends that all such is the result of spoliation and exploitation. The capitalist is able to appropriate the product of labor by reason of his ownership of certain means of production. Private property, then, in the instruments of production is unjust. The confiscation of private property is therefore just. If capital represents the fleecings of labor, no one can contend that its holders have claim to compensation on the ground of equity. The only grounds upon which compensation can be argued is that of mercy or expediency."

Even the Socialist will admit that under existing laws confiscation would be illegal. So long as they live under the present system they may be willing to abide by these laws—at least to the extent of not openly violating them and so subjecting themselves to the danger of incarceration in capitalist prisons. They insist, however, that as these laws were made for the protection of prop-

erty-holders, there is no reason why they should not change them and so make the ownership of property just as great a crime as the theft of property is to-day. All they wait for is the power to accomplish this purpose.

In other words, they stand for the principle that might makes right, and as you know, John, might doesn't do anything of the kind. In taking this position, Socialism proposes to violate natural right. A majority might do this; a majority might compel a minority to relinquish the rights that are inherent in natural law; but Socialism has no more right to do this thing than it has to re-establish slavery. Natural right does not depend upon a vote of a majority, but is grounded on primary law, and is eternal, no matter what majorities may say to the contrary.

That the contrary is the position of Socialists upon this question is fully attested by that eminent apostle of Socialism, Eugene V. Debs. In *The International Socialist Review* (February, 1912), Debs says:

"As a revolutionist, I can have no respect for capitalist property laws, nor the least scruple about violating them. I hold all

such laws to have been enacted by chicanery, fraud and corruption, with the sole end in view of dispossessing, robbing and enslaving the working class. But this does not imply that I propose making an individual law-breaker of myself and butting my head against the stone wall of existing property laws. That might be called force, but it would not be that. It would be mere weakness and folly. If I had the force to overthrow these despotic laws, I would use it without an instant's hesitation or delay, but I haven't got it, and so I am law-abiding under protest—not from scruple—and bide my time."

That the great majority of Socialists take the same position upon the question of confiscation will scarcely be denied by those who are at all familiar with the Socialist trend of thought. That they are serious in their effort to incite disrespect for all property laws is shown by the efforts that are made to teach the children in their Sunday schools that all rent, profit and interest are no more than so many forms of robbery. "The Red Catechism," used in Socialist schools, holds up to execration all those who are supposed to stand in the way of the revolution. They

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are referred to as the "landlord class" and the "capitalist class," and in these categories everybody is included who owns anything, however little, or who employs another person for a wage, even though it be but the bellows-boy or a humble dressmaker's assistant. Thus, "The Red Catechism" asks:

"When would Socialists allow anyone to have a machine?"

"When a person can use a machine for her own use. For instance, Socialists would let a dressmaker have a machine for her own work, but not for the purpose of employing others to exploit and rob them," is the answer.

How craftily the Socialist school-teachers impart their philosophy of destruction to the boys and girls who are so unfortunate as to come within their sphere of influence is told by a story, the truth of which is vouched for by the special commissioners of the *London Standard*—a paper which recently conducted a painstaking investigation of the menacing character of Socialism.

A well-known Socialist speaker and writer was addressing a meeting in Islington, attended chiefly by children. A portion of his address ran somewhat as follows:

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"The most interesting event of the week has been the train murder, of which most of you have no doubt heard. Two men were seated in a railway carriage. The one was rich; he had a diamond pin in his tie, a thick gold chain across his waistcoat, money jingled in his pockets when he moved. The other was poor, miserably poor; he wanted money for everything—food, clothes, lodging. He asked the rich man to give him of his superfluity; the rich man refused and so the poor man took by force what he could not get by entreaty, and in the use of that force—the only effective argument which the poor possess—the rich man was killed. The shedding of blood is always to be deplored, but there are times when it is warranted. Violence is a legitimate weapon for the righting of social wrongs."

The address over, the lecturer went about among the children questioning them with the object of finding out whether they had grasped the meaning of his address. To a bright intelligent girl of twelve, he said:

"You heard what I said about the two men in the train?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Did you understand what I meant by my story?"

"Oh, yes," answered the girl. "You meant that if we hadn't got something that we wanted, and somebody else has got it, we could go and take it from them." And the lecturer, smiling his approval, passed on.

There are Socialists who will indignantly repudiate all such ideas; yet we have but to turn to some of the most respectable authorities on Socialism to find ample evidence that the gentleman who lectured before the children of Islington was scarcely more radical than many of the more eminent advocates of Marxism. Bax, for example, in his "Ethics of Socialism," admits that "for him [the Socialist] it is indifferent whether social and political ends are realized by lawful or lawless means."

If it be said that this is a principle which was applied by Bax to conditions in general, and had nothing to do with the conduct of individuals, what is to be said of the advice which he gives ("Outlooks from the New Standpoint") to those who are searching for the "new" standard of personal integrity. "The cheapest way of obtaining goods is not to pay for them," said Bax, "and if a

buyer can avoid paying for the goods he obtains, he has quite as much right to do so as the seller has to receive double or treble their cost price and call it profit."

Karl Kautsky, who is regarded by many as the official interpreter of Socialism, has also laid down laws for the guidance of Socialists in ethical matters. He advances the theory that the moral law prevails only when we have intercourse with members of our own class, or social organization. "One of the most important duties is that of truthfulness to comrades," he says (*Neue Zeit*, October 3, 1903). "Towards enemies this duty was never considered binding." As the Socialist, even from his Sunday school days is taught to regard every employer as his enemy, the natural effect of such a principle, if put into operation in every day affairs, is obvious.

At the time this statement was made by Kautsky, some resentment was expressed towards him because, as he himself relates ("Ethics and the Materialistic Conception of History," p. 157), his "statement was interpreted as if he had attempted to establish a special social democratic principle in opposition to the principle of the eternal moral

law which commands unconditional truthfulness to all men." "Whether this interpretation was right or wrong," says Ming ("The Morality of Modern Socialism," p. 136), "we may judge from the well-attested fact that in a Socialist meeting in Hamburg a motion made to disavow Kautsky's proposition was lost."

In view of all these facts, it is difficult to see what ground Socialists can have for denying that they expect to put the process of confiscation into effect. Of course, not all Socialists are so radical as Bax, who takes occasion repeatedly to declare his advocacy of this doctrine. "Now, justice being henceforth identified with confiscation and injustice with the rights of property, there remains only the question of 'ways and means.' . . . The moral effect of sudden expropriation would be much greater than that of any gradual process." To him there can be no middle-ground between "possession and confiscation." Unless a man accepts the doctrine that private ownership is unjust and confiscation just, he cannot be a true Socialist (op. cit., pp. 75-76).

As we have seen, John, the principle of confiscation, once we have accepted the prop-

osition that private property is theft, is perfectly logical and even the methods of compensation proposed by Socialists are nothing more or less than confiscation in disguise. Cecil Chesterton states this fact very clearly in *The Church Socialist Quarterly* (January, 1911), where he says:

“Socialism means confiscation. Let no Socialist deceive himself about that. However ‘evolutionary’ (whatever that may mean) the process may be, whatever solatium to the present property-owners humanity and a sense of justice may dictate, Socialism means confiscation. The issue may be stated very concisely. However gradual the process of transferring wealth from the rich class to the community, will the rich at the end of that process be as wealthy as before, or won’t they? If they will, then the end of Socialism has not been achieved. If they won’t, then, under whatever form, their property has been confiscated.”

Quite in keeping with this presentation of the case is the resolution passed by the Socialist Federation of Australasia, held in Melbourne, in June, 1912. It read:

“The Federation vehemently protests

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against the working class being misled by the Labor or other parties into the belief that it is possible to socialize the instruments of production by a gigantic scheme of 'buying out,' or compensation to the possessing class, and warns the workers against endorsing such a Utopian, immoral and impracticable scheme." This, says *The Socialist* (March, 1911), the organ of the Socialist Labor party of England, "is a condensed statement of the position laid down in our manifesto of 1908."

Even Morris Hillquit, a conservative American Socialist, is compelled to admit that confiscation is likely to become the order of the day once Socialists are in power. "It is not unlikely that in countries in which the social transformation will be accomplished peacefully, the State will compensate the expropriated proprietors, while every violent revolution will be followed by confiscation. The Socialists have not much concern about this issue" ("Socialism in Theory and Practice," p. 140).

It may be true, as Hillquit says, that Socialists "are not much concerned" with the charge that they are planning to set up a State in which the Divine law, "Thou shalt

not steal," is to be set at naught—a State that will take from the successful and the thrifty the possessions they have accumulated—a State against the actions of which there can be no redress. But what have you to say as a decent law-abiding citizen, John? What?

Before leaving this subject, John, there is still another difficulty to be considered: if the Socialist State proposes to pay for the property it seizes, where is the money to come from for even an inadequate scheme of compensation? Do you think that the new State would be content to assume the additional burden imposed by such a debt as would be represented by all these obligations? No matter how extortionate the new methods of taxation might be, if they stop short of relative confiscation, it would take many decades to extinguish this liability. Is it not more likely that history would repeat itself, and that the story of the French Revolution would be repeated in the new Co-operative Commonwealth? In France, in the days of the Revolution, there was compensation for the expropriated in the beginning, but this speedily resolved itself into expropriation without indemnity. Nor must

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it be forgotten that, whatever provisions might be made, the State would be bound by its principles to prevent those whom it compensated from investing their funds, or engaging in business competition; transferring their money or bonds, or bequeathing their possessions to others; for, if this were not done, compensation would prove to be the means of re-establishing the very system which Socialism seeks to destroy.

CHAPTER XIV

THE REVOLUTION

My dear John,

You will meet many Socialists who will tell you that the Marxist creed anticipates that no force will be required in bringing about the change from capitalism to collectivism—no violence, no bloodshed. If anybody attempts to make you believe that the Socialist purpose is a peaceful one, refer him to "The Communist Manifesto," which was drafted by Marx and Engels, and terminates with these words:

"The Communists do not seek to conceal their views and aims. They declare openly that their purpose can be obtained only by violent overthrow of all existing arrangements of society. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose in it but their chains; they have a world to win."

If you are still told, as I have been, that such language was used by the founders of

Socialism, not because they meant to incite violence, but simply to arouse the interests of the worker in their propaganda, call your Socialist's attention to the transactions of The Hague Congress in 1872, when Marx declared:

"In most countries of Europe violence must be the lever of our social reform. We must finally have recourse to violence, in order to establish the rule of labor. . . . The revolution must be universal, and we find a conspicuous example in the Commune of Paris, which has failed because in other capitals—Berlin and Madrid—a simultaneous revolutionary movement did not break out in connection with this mighty upheaval of the proletariat of Paris."

Indeed, John, so revolutionary a program can never be brought about by anything less than the most violent of revolutions. It is true that there are Socialists who profess to believe that this end can be achieved by legal and political means; yet they themselves admit that this rule will hold good only in times and in countries where the purposes of the revolution can be accomplished by such peaceful methods. Where political means are wanting, or the Socialist

majority is insufficient to overawe completely all opposition, recourse to violence must be had.

We must not forget that, as Professor Woolsey says ("Communism and Socialism," p. 228), "there never was a revolution since history told the story of the world so complete as this" (namely, that which Socialism proposes to effect) ; and, as he later remarks (p. 280), nothing short of the persuasion of violent revolution "can lead holders of property . . . to acquiesce in so complete an overthrow of society and downfall of themselves, as modern Socialism contemplates."

Personally, with your knowledge of human nature, can you conceive of any other method by which Socialism can accomplish its aims? Do you deem it possible that such world-wide dispossession can come without a struggle on the part of those who are to be excluded from the enjoyment of what they have been brought up to believe they rightfully possess? Is it reasonable to expect that all holders of productive property, both large and small, will placidly surrender at the request of the Socialist demagogues? You don't believe this could happen?

Neither do the Socialists. In his "History of Socialism" (p. 10), Kirkup, who is anything but an extreme radical, admits that "the prevailing Socialism of the day is in large part based on the frankest and most outspoken revolutionary materialism"; while Hyndman, who is conspicuously the advocate of political action, writes in "Social Democracy" (p. 22): "We are not so foolish as to say we will not use force if it would bring us to a better period more rapidly. We do not say we are such men of peace."

Our own Charles H. Kerr, the head of the great American Socialist publishing house, takes a similar stand. In discussing the means by which American Socialists plan to overthrow capitalism, he says ("What to Read on Socialism," p. 10):

"As to the means by which the capitalist class is to be overthrown, the real question worth considering is what means will prove most effective. If it could best be done by working for 'one thing at a time' and bidding for the votes of the people who have no idea what the class-struggle means, we should no doubt favor that method. But history has made it very clear that such a method is a

dead failure. . . . If, on the other hand, the working class could best gain power by taking up arms, just as the capitalist class did when it dislodged the land-holding nobility from power, why not?"

These advocates of a violent revolution are mild-spoken, indeed, as compared to many of the better-known apologists of Socialism. Bebel, for example, in "Unsere Ziele" (p. 44), speaks more emphatically.

"We must not shudder at the thought of the possible employment of violence; we must not raise an alarm cry at the suppression of 'existing rights', at violent expropriation, etc. History teaches us that at all times new ideas were realized, as a rule, by a violent conflict with the defenders of the past, and that the combatants for new ideas struck blows as deadly as possible at the defenders of antiquity. Not without reason does Karl Marx in his work on 'Capital' exclaim:

"'Violence is the midwife that waits on every ancient society that is to give birth to a new one; violence is itself a social factor.'"

Dietzgen, too, advocates nothing short of revolution, and sees no reason why violence should be condemned under such conditions.

“Oh, ye short-sighted and narrow-minded who cannot give up the fad of the moderate organic progress!” he says. “Don’t you perceive that all our great liberal passions sink to the level of mere trifling, because the great question of social salvation is in the order of the day? Don’t you perceive that struggle and destruction must precede peace and construction, and that chaotic accumulation of material is the necessary condition of systematic organization, just as the calm precedes the tempest and the latter the general purification of the air? . . . History stands still because she gathers force for a great catastrophe.”

Both the “Red Catechism” and Joynés’ “Socialist Catechism” teach the same doctrine. In the “Red Catechism,” one looks in vain for any hint of contemplated compensation or peaceful methods of expropriation.

“How are the forms of government changed?” is asked.

“By means of revolution,” is the answer.

And in the “Socialist Catechism,” we find these words:

“Q. What is the revolution for which the Socialists strive? A. A revolution

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which will render impossible the individual appropriation of the products of associated labor and consequent exploitation and enslavement of the laborers. . . . Q. *How are forms of government changed, so as to readjust them to the economical changes in the forms of production which have been silently evolving in the body of society?* A. *By means of revolution.* Q. *Give an instance of this?* A. *The French Revolution of 1789."*

And even the Socialist hymn-books, the books from which the children in the Socialist schools sing, are filled with such sentiments as:

"They'll know full soon, the kind of vermin,
Our bullets hit in that last fight."

Or, as another Socialist song has it:

"Rise in your might, brothers, bear it no
longer,
Assemble in masses throughout the whole
land;
Teach the vile blood-suckers who are the
stronger
When workers and robbers confronted
shall stand."

Certainly, Kirkup is not far from the true Socialist ideal when he asserts ("History of Socialism," p. 160), that "a great revolutionary catastrophe is to close the capitalistic era"; even though he adds, "this must be regarded as a very bad preparation for the time of social peace which is forthwith to follow."

It is not easy for Socialists to evade this issue, especially in view of the fact that the instructions they have received from their leaders so invariably tend to incite violence. "If the people have not a scrapnel to shoot, they have broken bottles to throw," said Victor Grayson at Huddersfield, on August 12, 1907. "Chemistry," says Hyndman ("Historical Basis of Socialism," p. 443), "has placed at the disposal of the desperate and the needy cheap and powerful explosives, the full effects of which are as yet unknown. Every day adds new discoveries in this field; the dynamite of ideas is accompanied in the background by the dynamite of material force. These modern explosives may easily prove to capitalism what gunpowder was to feudalism."

If there remained any doubt as to the precise purposes of Socialism, the attitude

which its press and its speakers assume toward the use of violence during the French Revolution and the Paris Commune would afford evidence in plenty. Marx lauded the uprising of 1871 and praised its bloodthirsty crimes as the work of heroes. "Workingmen's Paris, with its Commune, will be forever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society," he said, in "The Civil War in France" (p. 78); and there is practically no end to the quotations that might be presented from the writings of Socialists who support Marx's position. Herron refers to the Commune as "a sort of glad and beatific moment, a momentary and prophetic spring-time in the long procession of the changing forms of parasitism and hypocrisy and brute force which we know as law and government" (*Boston Address*, 1903).

Quelch, too, in *Justice* (London, March 18, 1911), signalizes the Paris Commune as "a glorious event, which should ever be borne in mind and celebrated by the proletariat of all civilized countries," while the *Appeal to Reason*, when asked why American Socialists celebrated the anniversary of the Commune, replied (August 29, 1893):

"Because it represented a rise of the work-

ing class and served as a splendid example of what working men can accomplish."

And this glorious event, this "glad and beatific moment," is thus described by Mazzini, the Italian patriot:

"A people was wallowing about as if drunk, raging against itself and lacerating its limbs with its teeth, while howling triumphant cries, dancing an infernal dance before the grave which it had dug with its own hand, killing, torturing, burning and committing crimes without sense, shame or hope. It put one in mind of the most horrid visions of **Dante's Hell.**"

The Socialist historian, Benham, describes the events of the Commune in his "Proletarian Revolt," and the following summary of this description, with the pages for reference, appears in "Questions of Socialists and Their Answers" (p. 108), by Rev. William Stephens Kress:

Forty thousand Parisians were killed in battle (p. 211); public buildings and priceless works of art were burned or destroyed; Napoleon's column was torn down; the movable property of people who had fled the city was confiscated (p. 101); churches

were pillaged (p. 57); Jesuits were robbed of 400,000 francs (p. 43); 12 unfriendly journals were suppressed (p. 75); 300 of the clergy were imprisoned (p. 59); 200 priests were held as hostages (p. 118); priests were murdered (pp. 169, 171, 172, 181) . . . Deguery, the Curé of the Madeline, when catechised by Rigault, judge of the Council of Discipline, said: "We teach the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ." To which Rignault replied: "There are no Lords. We do not know any Lords." When Archbishop Darboy was questioned, he answered: "I am a servant of God." Rigault asked: "Where does he live?" To which the Archbishop replied: "Everywhere." Rigault then gave command: "Send this man to the Conciergerie, and issue a warrant for the arrest of his Master, one called God, who has no permanent residence, and is consequently, contrary to law, living in a perpetual state of vagabondage" (p. 57). Archbishop Darboy was ordered shot. When the order was given to fire he blessed the soldiers. "That's your benediction, is it? Now take mine," said Lolive, one of the soldiers, as he fired a pistol bullet into the Archbishop's body (p. 158). Mr. Wash-

burne, American Minister to France, said of Darboy: "He was one of the most charming and agreeable of men and was beloved alike by rich and poor. He had spent his whole life in acts of charity and benevolence" (p. 158). Speaking of the deadly hatred on the part of the Communards of all things religious, Benham remarks: "The actions of the Commune were proofs positive that they subscribed to the skeptical tenets which hold priests to be the advocates of human ignorance and a bar to the progress of the race" (p. 59).

It is such scenes of bloodshed and injustice—just this kind of triumph of might over right—that Socialists would have repeated. They cannot deny this, John, because this program, horrible as it may seem to us, is perfectly logical from the Socialist point of view. "According to Socialist ethics," says Ming ("The Morality of Modern Socialism," p. 344), "all means are morally good which lead to the victory of the proletariat. Why, then, should violence not be justified if it brings success? The working class is the only class that has the right and power to be; it is society, the na-

tion, the true public, while capitalism is but a cancer of the social organism. Why should it not employ violence when deemed an effective means for emancipation, conquest of power and introduction of collectivism?"

No, John, it is not when Socialists advocate violence that they are illogical; it is when they deny that they advocate and plan to resort to violence in accomplishing their purposes that they show a lack of logic.

CHAPTER XV

WHAT WE ARE PROMISED

My dear John,

We have already seen how impossible many of the basic theories of Socialism are; but, heretofore, we have been dealing with definite proposals, and not with the general application of the Socialist ideas. To return to the simile of the jig-saw puzzle, John, we may say that we now have all the pieces properly cut out before us. What we have to do is to fit them together and see what kind of a picture they give us.

Of course, we shall not be able to do this without some protests from Socialists. They do not like us to test their theories by constructing an imaginary Commonwealth, even though we use no other material than the facts which they themselves have given us—the admitted principles of international Socialism—in its construction. Indeed, Socialists insist that it is a mark of imbecility

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for anyone to ask for such a picture to say nothing of complaining because it is not available. "Only the ignorant would ask for a cut-and-dried plan of a state that can exist only in its completeness in the distant future," says Suthers, in his popular propaganda booklet, "Common Objections to Socialism Answered." "Why is it impossible to produce a cut-and-dried plan? Simply because comprehensive prophesy of the future is beyond human power. . . . Is there a man alive to-day who can forecast the details of all the events that will register themselves in his single consciousness tomorrow? . . . It were a silly waste of time for any Socialist to spend his life in drawing up cut-and-dried plans of a distant future. . . . They (the critics) say that one says one thing and one another. God of brains, what else do they expect?"

"For all his heat," says Kelleher ("Common Ownership," p. 105), "Mr. Suthers is far from answering a very serious objection, or rather, consciously or unconsciously, from dealing with the real point of the objection at all. It is not the mere details of the socialistic state that the critics of Socialism are demanding to have explained, but its

essential constitution. It is no reply to say that we do not require or expect to know the details about the future under the existing system. We do not, but we know the conditions in which these details will work themselves out, and rightly or wrongly we accept them, because, with all their faults, we are convinced that they are the best that are available for us."

Moreover, not all the Socialists have been as loath to forecast the details of the proposed Co-operative Commonwealth as Mr. Suthers. H. G. Wells has given us a rather elaborate series of prognostications in his "New Worlds for Old," and the following—Mrs. Besant's picture of the future which Socialism proposes—is said by Bliss to be "one of the best short ideals of Socialism yet written." In quoting this "prophecy" I have found it necessary to abridge it slightly, but you will find all the details that have been omitted in Mrs. Besant's contribution to the "Fabian Essays."

"The unemployed have been transformed into communal workers—in the country on great farms, improvements of the bonanza farms in America—in the towns in various trades. Public stores for agricultural and

industrial products are open in all convenient places, and filled with the goods thus communally produced. The great industries, worked as Trusts, are controlled by the state instead of by capitalist rings . . . After a while the private producers will disappear, not because there will be any law against individualistic production, but because it will not pay. The best form of management during the transition period, and possibly for a long time to come, will be through the Communal Councils which will appoint committees to superintend the various branches of industry. These committees will engage the necessary manager and foreman for each shop, factory, etc., and will hold power of dismissal as of appointment. . . . This (making the worker accommodate himself to the demand for labor), however, hardly solves the general question as to the apportioning of laborers to the various forms of labor. But a solution has been found by the ingenious author of 'Looking Backward.' Leaving young men and women free to choose their employments, he would equalize the rates of volunteering by equalizing the attractions of the trades. . . . But there are unpleasant and indispensable forms of labor

which, one would imagine, can attract none—mining, sewer-cleaning, etc. These might be rendered attractive by making the hours of labor in them much shorter than the normal working day of pleasanter occupations. . . . Further, much of the most disagreeable and laborious work might be done by machinery, as it would be now if it were not cheaper to exploit a helot class. . . . In truth, the extension of machinery is very likely to solve many of the problems connected with differential advantages in employment; and it seems certain that in the very near future the skilled worker will not be the man who is able to perform a particular set of operations, but the man who has been trained in the use of machinery. . . . Out of the value of the communal produce . . . all charges and expenses are deducted, and the remaining value should be divided among the communal workers as a 'bonus.' It would be obviously inconvenient, if not impossible, for the district authority to sub-divide this value and allot so much to each of its separate undertakings—so much left-over from gas works for the men employed there, so much from the tramways for the men

employed on them, and so on. It would be far simpler and easier for the municipal employes to be regarded as a single body, in the service of a single employer, the local authority; and that the surplus from the whole businesses carried on by the Communal Council should be divided without distinction among the whole of the communal employes."

Taking Mrs. Besant as a guide and calling upon other Socialist authorities for further directions, let us see if we can put our jig-saw puzzle together and thus ascertain what kind of a place the Co-operative Commonwealth is likely to be.

In the first place, John, it is scarcely probable that any Socialist will deny that all means of production, distribution and exchange will be in the hands of the collective state. This means that all the manufacturing will be done by the communal authorities acting for the people; that all the methods of disposing of these products, through shops or otherwise, will be under the same direction, and that all means of transportation—railways, steamships, etc.—will, like the Post Office to-day, be in the hands of the people or their representatives.

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So far, in all probability, we shall meet with no denial from the Socialists.

In the matter of land, however, our Socialist authorities are not so thoroughly in agreement. For example, when they are talking with the farmer, or other small land owner, who does not wish to have his real estate expropriated, some Socialists are quite willing to admit that their program makes no provision for the confiscation of farm lands. As you have seen, however, the Socialists are quite ready to hide any feature in their scheme that seems likely to arouse opposition in the minds of the small property holders. Yet, land being invariably included in "means of production" by all authoritative Socialists, it is not easy to see how any real Socialist can promise to exclude farm lands from the general plan of confiscation. It is far easier to assume that the *Appeal to Reason* and the Socialist propagandists who write propaganda matter to induce the farmer to vote the Socialist ticket are not telling him the truth about this phase of the question.

Then, too, when we remember the Socialist proposition that all labor in the Co-operative Commonwealth shall be performed collec-

tively and not under the direction of an employer, it is pretty difficult to imagine how a farmer will be able to operate a farm when he is prevented from employing others to help him. Certainly, Mrs. Besant's suggestion is the more logical one—farm lands must be expropriated and the industry of agriculture pursued on great farms, operating on the bonanza farm basis which has already proved such a gigantic failure in this country.

With all means of production, distribution and exchange in the hands of the Commonwealth, there would naturally be but one source of employment for labor—The Commonwealth. If you wanted a job, John, you would have to go to the employment bureau of the Commonwealth and present your application, upon which you would be assigned to such a position as might chance to be open at the time your application was received. You are a machinist, but it might chance that machinists are not much in demand on the day you apply for the job. Accordingly, you would be sent to paint houses, or to build streets; anything that happened to be open would be assigned to you and you would have to take it or starve

to death, because the Commonwealth, as we have seen in a previous letter, could not be expected to find for every applicant the particular kind of work that he preferred to perform.

Under our present system, inadequate as it is in some respects, a man can select the work that he prefers, and there is no limit to the heights that he can ascend, provided he shows an ability to occupy a higher position in the industrial world. To-day merit counts; to-day knowledge and initiative, as well as industry, mean something. But, under the system that Socialism proposes, it would be the favor of the bosses or, at least, the votes of one's associates that could alone secure promotion.

Election of bosses by popular vote may sound all right in theory, but I seriously fear that the scheme would not operate successfully if applied practically. Popularity would be a poor substitute for proficiency, especially in view of the fact that it would probably be the easiest boss and not the most exacting boss, who would secure the votes of the most people. Try to picture what would happen under these conditions, and you will have taken the first step toward a

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clear understanding of industrial conditions under Socialism.

But, let us suppose, for argument's sake, that you have secured employment at a trade that is fairly satisfactory to you and that the more important industrial problems have been reasonably well adjusted. At the end of the work-week you receive the labor check which represents the "full value" of the products which have been produced. We have already seen how difficult the Socialists will find it to determine the full value of the work of each operative and to measure it for exchange, so there is no need to emphasize this question further. We will suppose that the apparently insurmountable difficulties have been satisfactorily overcome, and that you are well pleased with the share you receive in your labor check.

Now, what are you going to do with it?

We are told that the laborer will be permitted to purchase whatever he pleases—as much or as little as he has a mind to buy. Of course he can buy only from the State because everything—all the stores, shops, factories, farms, etc.—will be owned and operated by the government. "Our cities cannot give us to-day two things so simple

as pure water and clean streets," remarks Father Kress. "By what magic will they be made capable of doing the thousands of things implied in production and distribution?"

Imagine yourself, your pay check in your hand, going in to the gigantic government warehouse, or as Mrs. Besant prefers to call them, "public stores for agricultural and industrial products." The fact that you are to be permitted to buy anything you like, or can, with the amount in hand, presupposes that everything you desire will be kept in stock. But what if you do not find it? The clerk could not promise to get it for you, because it is not impossible that the committee on manufactures may have decided that you ought not to have it. Caviare and Limburger cheese are two commodities that are extremely pleasing to some people's palate, while there are other people who could not be induced to eat them for pay. Suppose the committee on manufactures was composed chiefly of persons who saw no excuse for the existence of caviare or Limburger cheese. Is it likely that they would take the trouble to see that the supply of these commodities did not run short,

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especially when, in a Commonwealth where there was no competition, there is no need to make any special effort to please purchasers?

Freedom to purchase is impossible unless every possible want is provided for. Perhaps this condition would exist in the Co-operative Commonwealth. Perhaps it wouldn't!

Let us take another example, John.

Suppose you wanted to build a house. At present you can do this in accordance with any plans that please you. You don't have to ask anybody's advice if you don't want to. But would things be like this under Socialism? You might want to build a bookcase in the centre of the room instead of around the walls. You might have very good reasons for wishing to do this. But do you think it would be a simple matter to convince the committee on carpentering that your plan should be carried out, if they happened to disapprove of your ideas? Under our present system you can get almost any kind of work done if you are willing and able to pay for it. All you have to do is to find the laborer and employ him. Under Socialism, it wouldn't be a single laborer that would have to be seen, but a committee whose

consent would have to be obtained before any laborer could undertake your work.

The Socialists tell us that Socialism will inspire inventors, writers and other mental workers to a degree never before dreamt of.

Is this possible?

An invention to-day stands a fair chance of being put on the market so long as it has the slightest evidence of practicability; somebody can usually be found to furnish the money for the experiments needed to perfect the scheme of the inventor. But how would it be in a Commonwealth where the practicability of an invention and its value as a social factor would have to be determined by a special committee before it could be produced and its merits tested by actual experience? We know how much money has been spent in the experimental work of many inventors. We know, too, that, in the majority of cases, inventions have been perfected in the face of widespread scepticism. Few people believed that the telephone would ever be made of practical value. Even when the telephone had succeeded and become an absolute necessity, the great mass of the people laughed at the idea of wireless telegraphy. Do you think that a committee

on inventions would have passed favorably upon such ideas, and would have authorized the necessary appropriations for perfecting them in the face of such strong popular opposition?

Socialists also tell us that freedom is the choicest jewel in our possession; that freedom of press, speech and assemblage are rights which are inherent in human nature and which must be defended, with our lives if need be. But what do we find under Socialism? Could there be any freedom of press when the Socialist State owned every press, when the Socialist State employed every printer, when the Socialist State controlled every sheet of white paper?

Before a printed word could be given to the world, it would have to pass the censorship of the special bureau entrusted with these responsibilities. Such a committee would have to determine whether an author's work was worth printing or not; and suppose, by any chance, an author or an editor desired to give expression to opinions that did not harmonize perfectly with those of the ruling majority, do you suppose that the State-owned presses would be permitted to run in the publication of such theories?

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There is one thing, John, that you can depend upon; and that is that the Socialist scheme makes absolutely no provision for freedom. The Socialists talk as if we were "wage slaves," but no conditions existing to-day—not excepting the worst—represent such galling servitude as would exist under the despotic bureaucracy that Socialism would develop. It is true that you might be guaranteed against unemployment so long as you were willing to take the kind of work provided for you. It is true that you might exchange your labor checks for the commodities that other workers had produced—so long as you desired to purchase the kind of things that the officials of the Commonwealth wanted you to buy. It is true that you might be permitted to write and speak and teach, so long as you desired to promulgate ideas approved by the majority. Once you begin to think along the lines advocated by the minority, what do you think would happen to you? If a full stomach were all that man required for his happiness, the Co-operative Commonwealth might seem to offer an enviable state of existence. It is because Socialists believe that a full stomach is the highest aim of man,

that they fail to recognize the inadequate character of their proposed Commonwealth.

It is an elaborate program that Socialism has planned—a program that provides for free services on every hand, free amusements, free excursions, free transportation, free professional services, etc. Education, of course, will be free, not only the tuition and the books but the clothes the children wear and the victuals they eat. “Will the State be able to carry out this program?” asked Godkin in *The Forum* (June, 1894). “It cannot give more than it gets; will we be rich enough to pay the extravagant bills of Socialism?” It is assumed by Socialists that the wealth of the State will be unlimited, but on what foundations is this assumption based?

I have called your attention to merely a few of the problems that suggest themselves when we attempt to consider what kind of an existence Socialism has planned for us. There are hundreds of other examples that will occur to you if you stop to think the matter over seriously. If this is the kind of life you want to live—the kind of freedom you think you would enjoy—you are welcome to it.

CHAPTER XVI

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

My dear John,

While I think I have shown you that Socialism is not what it pretends to be—a certain remedy for all the social evils of our day—and that it is utterly impossible for Socialism to keep its promises by making this world over into a veritable kingdom of God on earth, we must not make the mistake of dismissing all the contentions of the Socialists as so many exhibitions of mental aberration. There is madness in some of their doctrines—it is a crazy kind of a future that they have planned for us; but behind all their absurdities there is a well-justified protest against a series of social and industrial abuses from which the great body of humanity is suffering, as from so many hideous sores.

Mind you, John, I do not say that Socialists never exaggerate existing conditions. We have already seen how prone

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they are to try to make us put the most gloomy construction on the social outlook, and how ready they are to twist statistics into all kinds of strange contortions to make them fit their theories, in an endeavor to prove that the evils which exist are ever so much more glaring than they really are.

But the evils exist. The worker does not get an adequate share of the wealth which he contributes to produce. The problem of unemployment cries for solution from one end of the world to the other. In every State and country the evils of child labor demand a remedy. Everywhere numbers of men and women work under conditions that are a disgrace to our boasted civilization, and in all parts of the land workers are compelled to live in an environment and under circumstances that absolutely preclude the attainment of the ideals toward which humanity is supposed to be tending.

In a word, we cannot deny that something is radically wrong with the world. So far we may go hand in hand with the Socialist. To the extent that he demands reform measures which shall give to the worker greater opportunities for development and happiness, we must heartily concur. But is

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the Socialist right when he asserts that these wrongs are the inevitable result of the system which he calls "capitalism"? Is it impossible, as he insists, that these wrongs may be righted except by the overthrow of our present system and the substitution of collective ownership of all means of production for our privately-owned competitive method of managing things?

When the Socialist tells us that Individualism is responsible for all these evils, he is right. When he tells us that these evils are inherent in the system which permits individual ownership of productive properties, he is wrong. It is not the competitive system that is responsible for all our social and industrial abuses. These unjust features of modern life are the direct result of the vicious practices which selfish and cruel individuals have adopted in their relations to their fellow-men, but which do not necessarily have any place in the system itself.

If you were to study the development of political economy, you would discover that the marked degradation of the workers, as well as much of the callousness of the prosperous to the sufferings of the poor are the direct result of the economic ideas promul-

gated by the Liberal philosophers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. "Liberty, fraternity and equality," are terms to conjure with; but, once we apply these principles to the practical affairs of life, we have started society upon a downward course which can be checked only by a complete reversal of such ideas.

The French Deists sought to remove all trammels from man that he might follow nature without restraint. They, and the economists who followed them — Adam Smith, Ricardo, Bentham, Mill, and others — saw no room for morality, religion, or even ethics, in political economy. The natural effect of such principles was to foster the selfish impulses of man rather than enforce conformity to the standards of conduct which are embodied in the eternal laws of justice. These principles taught men that the matter of prime importance was self-interest; they encouraged cruelty and greed; they opened the way for the practice of unregulated competition and stultified the Christian ideals of self-renunciation and human brotherhood.

A political economy without ethics, without a rule of right except as set down in

man-made law, can have none of the elements of justice save, possibly, through sheer accident. Legal morality and the morality for which Christianity has always stood are as opposed as the two poles in many particulars. Where the principles of true morality are recognized, there is no inherent antagonism between capital and labor. They have interests that are mutual, and there is no excuse for turning the industrial world into a battleground upon which strength and cunning usurp the place of love and justice. The moment that the higher ideals of life are subordinated to the passion of greed, the degradation of the weaker and less cunning becomes inevitable.

History shows us that this is precisely what has happened. Instead of becoming a means to progress, the competitive system, through lack of control, has resulted in a form of unlicensed competition which, as J. J. Welsh asserts ("Socialism, Individualism and Catholicism," p. 19), may be "rightly described as commercial cannibalism. . . . It delivers up weak, unorganized labor into the hands of organized and omnipotent capital. . . . Without regard for the skill of

the worker, the value of his labor, or the requirements of a decent human life, the competitive principle justifies the capitalist in paying the workman the least, which, in the circumstances, he can compel him to accept. The employer shelters himself under the law of supply and demand, as though that were the supreme regulator of the remuneration and conditions of labor. There is no savor of morality in such a principle. It gives an unfair advantage to the few rich, who control the instruments of production, over the defenceless masses, and it makes a question of strict justice—the remuneration and the actual subsistence of the toiler and his family—depend upon a trial of strength between two contending parties.”

There is no right-minded man who is not ready to join the Socialists in their condemnation of the effects of the operations of this principle of unrestrained competition. Were we compelled to believe that there was no way by which this system could be changed, but that the human sorrow and merciless injustice resulting from the exploitation of the weak by the strong must continue unchecked until our system of

production and distribution has been completely overthrown, there are comparatively few of us who would not go still further and urge the adoption of the collective methods of industry. It is because we believe that it is our unregulated competition, and not the principle of individual ownership itself, which is destructive of right and justice, that we do not and cannot join hands with the Socialists. As we shall see, it is possible to bring about a correction of the abuses from which countless thousands have suffered and are still suffering. As we shall see, there are instruments within our reach with which we may check the unbounded lust of greed which has made this generous earth a vale of woe and mourning for the poor.

While we do not agree with socialistic principles, therefore, we recognize the justice embodied in the Socialist protest; and, much as we deplore the spirit which has exaggerated our evils with a view to inciting class hatred and a revolution that can result only in violence and bloodshed, we should be blind if we did not appreciate the fact that it is this protesting sentiment that has been to a marked degree responsible for the

moral awakening that will eventually set things right.

For example, there can be no doubt that there is justification for the Socialist declaration regarding the unequal distribution of wealth. The facts in the case are too notorious to permit of denial, when multitudes are suffering all the woes of destitution, when many are starving for lack of life's bare necessities, and while the few are able to waste in extravagance the means which would relieve the sufferings of countless thousands if properly applied. "The pestilential principle that each man has the right to dispose of his wealth without regard to the common good is the cause of the widespread mischief," says Welsh.

This unjust principle is also responsible for the inadequate rate of wage and the horrible conditions which exist so generally among the miserable multitude. There are those who may deny that such conditions prevail; but our own eyes and ears, to say nothing of the great mass of statistical information which is within our reach, prove conclusively that there are untold thousands of children who

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are born into the world without a chance of life or happiness; that vast multitudes of young women, unable to sustain life in the unequal struggle for existence, are driven to the streets for the sustenance which they find it impossible to earn by honest toil; that men and women, who are entitled in strict justice to a wage that will support them and those dependent on them, are deprived of all their natural rights through no fault of their own. For them there is no such thing as decent food, clothing and shelter possible, to say nothing of the hope of ever being able to meet the higher but no less natural requirements of life.

Christianity has always held that it is the duty of each and all to preserve life decently and that anything that tends to make this impossible is a crime. "This idea of class duties and class comforts is either explicitly or implicitly referred to as the final test in every question of distribution or exchange," says Ashley, who quoted Langenstein in evidence of the fact that these principles of industrial justice were recognized prior to the fourteenth century. "Everyone," says the latter, "can determine for himself the

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just price of the wares he has to sell by simply reckoning what he needs in order to support himself in his rank of life"; and those who have read the writings of the Church Fathers do not need to be told that Christianity has ever maintained the necessity of recognizing the right of the worker to a living wage. These traditional teachings are embodied in the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII, who repudiates the principle that competition alone determines the morality of the so-called free contract.

"There is a dictate of nature more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man, that the remuneration must be enough to support the wage-earner in reasonable and frugal comforts," says the Pope. "If, through necessity or fear of a worse evil, the workman accepts harder conditions because an employer or contractor will give him no better, he is the victim of force and injustice."

The Socialists claim that the Marxian gospel affords the only possible relief for the victims of this force and injustice. As I have already asserted, if this were true, a great many more of us would be Marxists.

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As it is, however, there is a remedy which we may adopt with safety, and with every assurance that it may be applied successfully if we but get together and work together in the right way.

CHAPTER XVII

THE REMEDY

My dear John,

As we have seen, it is not necessary that we should study life through the smoked glasses of Socialism to realize that all is not well with the world. Indeed, we have no need to look further than our own everyday experiences to witness misery that is heart-rending, to see evils that imperatively demand relief. That such conditions exist, nobody can deny; and the Socialists have made good use of this fact in shaping their appeal for "universal justice." Certainly, it is an argument that cannot fail to touch the human heart that is at all moved to sympathy.

If such evil conditions exist, it is our duty to remedy them, and with as little delay as possible. Sympathy is not enough. We must act and act at once—but how? It is a question that we who are not Socialists are frequently asked. "If the Socialists are

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wrong," our friends inquire, "what have you to offer as a substitute?"

One of the greatest weaknesses in the Socialist position is due to the fact that it persists in looking at life from the wrong perspective. Instead of finding the right point of view, it examines life's canvas from so close a range that it loses all sense of proportion. Assuming this attitude toward current events, the abuses apparent are magnified to such a degree as to make it appear that Marx was correct in asserting that the capitalist system is rotten to the core, and that the only hope for relief lies in collective ownership.

Are the Socialist contentions true? Is everything in this country tending towards hopeless bankruptcy?

Fortunately there are facts in plenty which answer these questions. There never was a period in the world's history in which greater progress was made toward modifying—if not actually eliminating—the burdens that have caused so much misery to the poor. You must remember, John, that the evils against which Socialists inveigh so bitterly are not new evils. They had their origin generations ago; they have been

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promoted by the sophistical theories of Economic Liberalism; and, if they now seem more indefensible than they did to our grandfathers and great-grandfathers, it is because our intenser conceptions of the ideals of human brotherhood compel us to view life with closer scrutiny.

In truth, while the indictment of Socialism is warranted in one sense of the word, it is by no means entirely justified. If we were doing nothing to improve conditions for the workers and for the relief of the poor, the outlook would be a hopeless one; but, when we realize that, while Socialism itself is doing practically nothing but denouncing and slandering society (where it does not actually oppose our reform measures), we are working steadily toward the solution of our social problems, we can see good reason to believe that our civilization is far from being the failure it has been pictured.

No better evidence of the extent of the world's material progress can be found than in labor's advancement during the past century. To-day, there is still much to be done before we can attain the ideal embodied in the expression, "a fair day's pay"; yet it is interesting to note that we should have to

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go back no further than the first quarter of the eighteenth century to find an Act of the Court of Massachusetts under which employers could adopt a maximum wage schedule. In a word, this law prevented an employer from giving more than the specified sum per day; yet no effort was made to prevent him from paying the lowest wages for which a laborer could be induced to work. Between this condition and the minimum wage agitation with which we are now familiar, there is a contrast that speaks eloquently in evidence of our social progress.

In England, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the situation of labor was worse than it has ever been in this country. Forbidden by law to establish any safeguard in the form of organization for his own protection, the employe was absolutely at the mercy of his employer. The result was a condition of affairs that was barbaric. If the employer paid the rate of wage agreed in money, or even in "truck," he was under no further legal responsibility; and, as the introduction of improved machinery in many trades was beginning to make it possible for women and children to perform the duties which hitherto had fallen only upon men, an

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employer was able to make the worker accept terms that made proper sustenance impossible.

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, this was the condition of things: the laborer was (1) prohibited from forming protective combinations or unions; (2) compelled to work sixteen hours out of each twenty-four; (3) forced to accept as recompense wages which were wholly inadequate to provide the most vital necessities of life; and, as though these conditions were not sufficiently oppressive, (4) employers were permitted to make payment at long intervals, or in "truck," *and could charge interest at the rate of 260 per cent per annum on all cash advances made to the needy worker.* Apparently, this was the time when Marx ought to have appeared with his doctrine of wage slavery and his incitement to class hatred. But, when we compare these conditions with those which exist to-day, we can readily see that, while things are still far from being "ideal," the worker assuredly is not sinking steadily into deeper depths of degradation.

Even in this country the conditions of the laborer were far from enviable a century

ago. As McMaster tells us in his "History of the People of the United States":

"His house was meaner, his food coarser, his clothing was of commoner stuff, his wages lower, and his hours of daily labor far longer than those of the men who in our time perform like service. Down to the opening of the nineteenth century, a farm hand was paid \$3 a month. A strong boy could be had for \$1 a month. Women who went out to service received \$10 a year; type-setters were given \$1 per day. The hours of work were from sunrise to sunset, and, as the sun rose later and set earlier in the Winter than in the Summer, *wages in December were one-third less than in July*. On such pittance it was only by the strictest economy that a mechanic could keep his children from starvation and himself from jail," for these were the days when a man could be arrested upon the complaint of a creditor and, being lodged in jail, could be kept there until the indebtedness was paid—a system which actually permitted life imprisonment for debt.

If I were to tell you of the indescribably vile conditions under which the workers of those days toiled and lived, you would find

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it difficult to believe that human beings could bear such burdens and survive. If you are interested in investigating this subject, there are books in the libraries that will tell you the story in all its damning details. And this is the perspective from which you should view life. It is, to say the least, "unscientific" to exaggerate the weak spots in present-day civilization to such an extent as to convey the impression that the evils criticized are the worst that have ever been known, when a few hours' study of history would be sufficient to disclose the fact that circumstances are now infinitely less oppressive than they have been in the past. At the same time the knowledge that things are incalculably better than they were even half a century ago, and that they are steadily improving, must not blind us to the fact that there is still much to be done—more perhaps than has yet been accomplished—and that it is our duty as good citizens to do our part in remedying all our social defects.

But what are we to do?

Let history answer.

Do you imagine that it was the individual capitalist—the "heartless and greedy sweater"—who was responsible for all the im-

provements that have occurred in our industrial conditions? No, it was the worker himself who secured all these reforms. The worker, chiefly through his own effort, has brought about the reformation that we witness to-day, and it is the worker who must carry on the campaign until all the abuses of which we complain have been eliminated.

It is from the pages of history that we learn the story of the past; it is to the pages of history that we must turn for advice as to what we must do in the future. Let us see what history tells us.

In the first place we learn that, despite all the legal prohibitions then existing, the workers organized new associations. In the beginning these organizations were merely "friendly societies," ostensibly formed to provide aid for the men in time of sickness or other misfortune; but behind this purpose was the inception of the peaceful revolution that was to rescue labor from the mire of degradation into which it had been so pitilessly thrust.

Here then we have our first lesson: *the duty of the worker to organize*. As Portenar says in his "Problems of Organized Labor" (p. 4), "the trade union came into

being because it was needed; because the helpless individual found in concerted action with other individuals his best, if not his only, means of resistance to the arbitrary exercise of power, to injustice, to cruelty. It was a hard fight. Wealth, and the merciless power of wealth; the state law, forbidding workmen to co-operate for the purpose of increasing wages and fixing maxima, with its interpreters zealous for its rigorous enforcement; legislative bodies deaf to the cries of those who were denied the privilege of a voice in the selection of their members; and the broken-spirited timidity of those in whose behalf the union was created; these were the forces to be contended with and overcome."

But the trade union was born, and the trade union has won many a victory. But for this weapon of defense—and sometimes of offense—the condition of the worker would not have been what it is to-day. Through its efforts legislation has been secured. Through its efforts public opinion has been shaped, and it is to its efforts that we must look primarily for future betterment of labor's condition.

The first step, therefore, is one of organization; and, this step once taken, our

subsequent progress follows logically. As the strength of the organized workers increases, more demands can be made, and with a much better prospect that they will be recognized. Legislatures, like parliaments, are no longer deaf and blind to the requirements of the workers. We have seen the circumstances under which the laborer existed in the past. We know from personal experience the hardships suffered by those who live under the lessened burden of to-day.

“Looking broadly to labor legislation as it has occurred in this country,” said Carroll D. Wright, “it may be well to sum up its general features. Such legislation has fixed the hours of labor for women and certain minors in manufacturing establishments; it has adjusted the contracts of labor; it has protected employes by insisting that all dangerous machinery shall be guarded. . . . it has created boards of factory inspectors whose powers and duties have added much to the health and safety of the operatives; it has in many instances provided for weekly payments . . . it has regulated the employment of prisoners; protected the employment of children; . . . provided for the ventilation of factories and workshops;

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established industrial schools; . . . modified the common-law rules relative to the liability of employers for injuries of their employes; fixed the compensation of railroad corporations for negligently causing the death of employes, and has provided for their protection against accident and death."

In spite of all that has been accomplished, however, we must increase enormously our efforts along these lines, and so open up new avenues of progress. The question of the hours of labor requires adjustment; child labor, sweating, the home industries, the standardization of wages on a "living" basis, are but a few of the problems which must be settled; and the only way to settle them is by means of legislation.

We must not forget, however, that laws are of little use unless they are enforced. We already have laws on our statute books which would quickly put an end to some of our abuses were they to be applied adequately. This teaches us that, unless legislation is supported by public opinion, it will be practically useless. Until public sentiment forbids, laws are evaded; and a statute that is a "dead letter" is a pretty sterile "reform measure."

It is here that we find the next duty of the worker. Personally, and through his organization, he must carry out a campaign of education that will help to develop a more alert social conscience—that will arouse all good citizens to the justice of his demands, and so frustrate the efforts of the rascals who, greed-inspired, exist chiefly to set the moral laws at naught.

To-day, this program can be carried out more easily than ever before in human history. The social conscience is already awakening and in his efforts to win more support for his righteous cause, the worker will derive aid from the churches as well as from the many organizations that have come into existence during the past decade solely to cast their influence in behalf of social-welfare movements. The social question to-day includes the industrial question. Moreover, it is more than an economic and political question. It has its moral and religious phases and so appeals directly to all public-spirited men and women. By organization, legislation and education, a still wider and ever-widening interest can be excited, until one by one the merciless evils

—now the source of so much woe—have been eliminated.

The objection may be raised that the program outlined is anything but a simple one. I will admit that this is so; but I can assure you, John, that the difficulties presented by the remedial measures I have suggested are really not as great as those which we should experience were we to attempt to carry out the plan which the Socialists have arranged for us. The program I have outlined represents a sane solution of our industrial problems; and the better acquainted with Socialism you become the more firmly you will be convinced that the so-called “palliatives” afford the only safe remedy for existing evils. There can be no short-cut to the end we seek. Many forces operate to produce present conditions and they must be considered and co-ordinated. It is because the Socialists have failed to recognize this fact and make provision for it that they have lost their way and wandered into such a tangle of absurdities.

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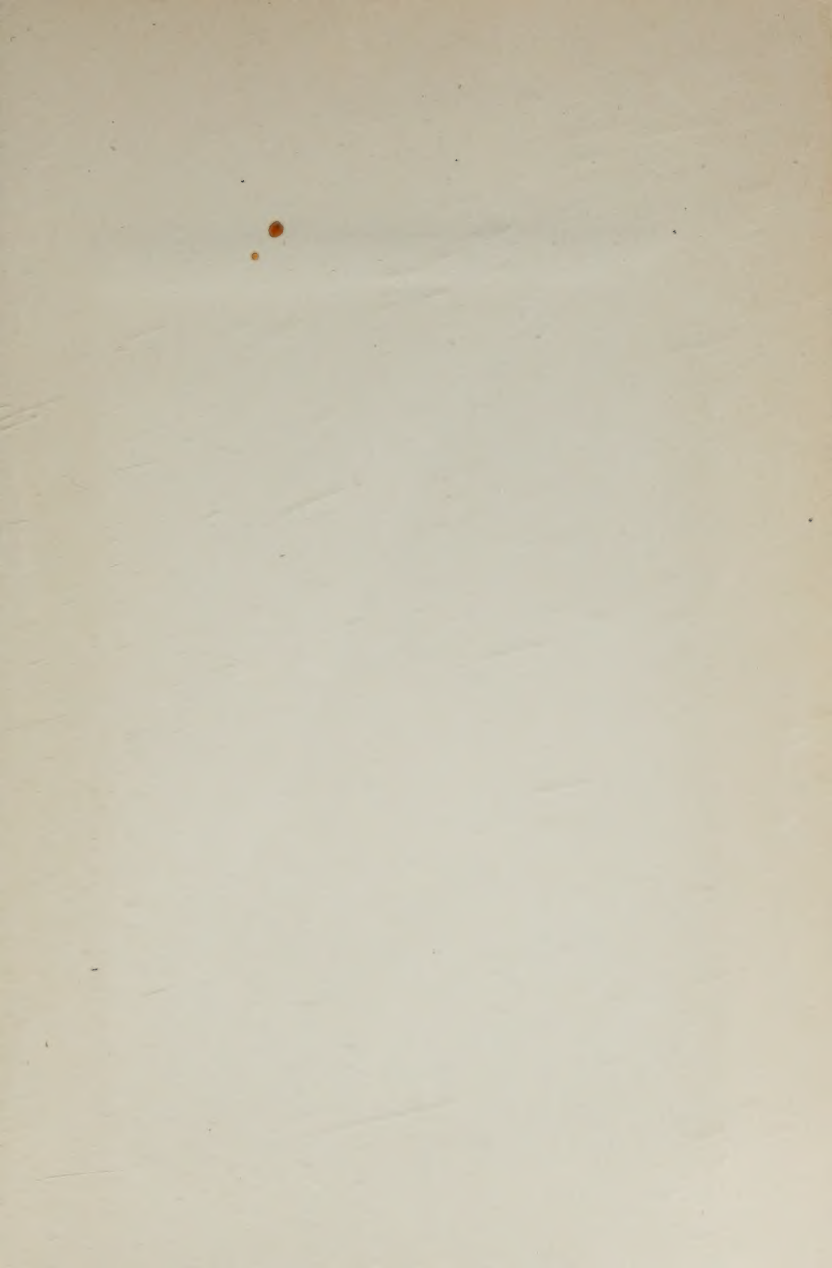
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